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VICTIMOLOGY 101 AT YALE
HEATHER MAC DONALD

DOWN WITH FACEBOOK!

BY Matt Labash

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Contents

March 16, 2009 • Volume 14, Number 25

2 Scrapbook . . . . . *Solomonic Questioning*

4 Casual . . . . *Christopher Caldwell, companion for Change*

5 Correspondence . . . . . *Blessings, the Bard & more*

7 Editorial . . . . . *Second Thoughts*

Articles

8 The Anti-Stimulus Plan *The Obama budget ignores the economic crisis* . . . . . BY YUVAL LEVIN

9 Can the GOP Come Back? *Yes, it can* . . . . . BY JAY COST

11 The Administration Kowtows *Are the Chinese people alone now?* . . . . . BY ETHAN GUTMANN

12 The New Blacklist *Freedom of speech—unless you annoy the wrong people* . . . . . BY MAUREEN MULLARKEY

14 The Not-So-Great Game *Obama goes AWOL on Afghanistan* . . . BY TOM DONNELLY, TIM SULLIVAN & RAPHAEL COHEN

16 Obama's Global Warming Straddle *Lord, make me carbon neutral . . . but not yet* . . . . . BY MICHAEL GOLDFARB

18 Enemies of the White House . . . *Discontent is growing on the center-right* . . . . . BY FRED BARNES

Cover: Gary Locke

Features

20 Down with Facebook! . . . . . BY MATT LABASH
What nobody bothers to mention is that the site is mind-numbingly dull.

25 Victimology 101 at Yale . . . . . BY HEATHER MAC DONALD
Guess who's exempted from the austerity campaign?

Books & Arts

28 Chased by Modernity *The Hunt confronts the 21st century* . . . . . BY ROGER SCRUTON

31 Lincoln Incarnate *If our 16th president were alive today . . . he wouldn't be Barack Obama* . . . . . BY ANDREW FERGUSON

35 Emerald Idyll *Irish eyes aren't always smiling* . . . . . BY PATRICK J. WALSH

36 Members Only *The obstacle to academic freedom is academics* . . . . . BY MARK BAUERLEIN

38 Surge Protector *Doubting Thomas Ricks wrestles with success* . . . . . BY DANIEL FORD

39 Penn's Friends *He knew what he was doing but not what he was saying* . . . . . BY PHILIP TERZIAN

40 Parody . . . . . *TurboNominee*

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BPA INTERNATIONAL

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Solomonic Questioning

Like many readers of the *New York Times Magazine*, THE SCRAPBOOK has whittled down its consumption over the years, skipping past the breathless profiles of Hollywood hunks, surreal comic strips, heroin-chic fashion layouts, and an "ethics" column written (literally) by a stand-up comedian. Our weekly reading is now confined to the obscenely expensive real estate ads in the back, and the "Questions For" column, conducted by Deborah Solomon.

We may soon be down to just the housing porn.

The purpose of the "Questions For" column, in accordance with standard *Times* editorial policy, is to grovel before people the *Times* admires and excoriate those of whom the *Times* disapproves. Deborah Solomon is nothing if not a reliable *Times* employee, so you can imagine the difference in tone between the questions put to William Ayers, for example, and those to anyone remotely right-of-center. For Ayers, Solomon was playful and affectionate, a little like a college director of admissions interviewing a surly lacrosse player she desperately wants to recruit. Toward conservatives she expresses cold disapproval, with lots of hostile follow-up inquiries.

Readers can also imagine Solomon's dilemma recently when she interviewed Dambisa Moyo, a young Zambian economist with an Oxford Ph.D. who has worked at Goldman Sachs and the World Bank. Moyo is the author of a well-received and recently published book—*Dead Aid: Why Aid Is Not Working and How There Is a Better Way For Africa* (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 208 pp., $24)—which argues that Bono-inspired assistance for impoverished Africa is worse than useless: Not only is most of it siphoned off by corrupt regimes, it perpetuates dependency, deepening poverty and despair. Clearly, Solomon was horrified by Moyo's radical common sense, but knew she couldn't treat an African overachiever with quite the same contempt reserved for a Republican. Her interview style had the strained quality of someone who wanted to wring her subject's neck but was forced, by convention, to merely wag a finger.

To wit, Solomon's final question nicely captured her quandary and worldview: "For all your belief in the potential of capitalism, the free market is now in free fall and everyone is questioning the supposed wonders of the unregulated market." But she had clearly met her match in Dambisa Moyo, who responded (no doubt with a smile): "I wish we questioned the aid model as much as we are questioning the capitalism model. Sometimes the most generous thing you can do is just say no."

Touché! ♦

Good Job, Emory

Fairness is always a beautiful thing, and, when delivered by a college president overruling administrators cowed by campus leftists, it merits special commendation for being rare. So it is that THE SCRAPBOOK tips its homburg to President James Wagner of Emory University for doing right without hesitation in a recent dustup on his campus.

The College Republicans had invited veteran conservative David Horowitz to speak on academic freedom. The last time Horowitz appeared at Emory, in 2007, offcampus radicals disrupted his talk on Islamic extremism, and the speaker had to be escorted from the stage. So last month, shortly before his appearance, his hosts were informed that he had been designated a "controversial speaker," requiring extra security, for which the College Republicans would have to pay. Nine extra officers would be laid on for four hours each, at a cost of $1,400—though in its magnanimity, the administration would bill the students only $600.

Horowitz appealed to the dean of the college, arguing that punishing the victims of campus threats unfairly burdens student conservatives who are themselves well behaved—and besides, singling out some speakers as "controversial" is bad policy. When Elaine Brown, former head of the murderous Black Panthers, spoke at Emory, she was not so designated (a sore point with Horowitz, whose account of the Panthers' virtually proven, though never prosecuted, offing of his friend Betty Van Patter is chillingly told in his memoir *Radical Son*).

The dean brushed off the appeal: The matter was settled. But not so for President Wagner. In a cordial personal meeting with Horowitz, Wagner agreed that the policy ill-suited a campus where he favors lively intellectual exchange. The College Republicans didn't have to pay, and, thanks to its sterling president, Emory burnished its good name. ♦

All the Plagiarists Fit to Print?

The *New York Times*, as it will be the first to brag to you if you ask, has an elaborate set of internal rules to prevent conflicts of interest and other ethical lapses by its reporters and contributors.

In a 2005 column noting the paper's increasing use of freelancers, the paper's "public editor" lamented that "there's no way someone who's working for the *Times* today, some other publication tomorrow and yet another on Tuesday can possibly absorb and live by the *Times*'s complex code as fully as staff members. Unrevealed conflicts, violations of *Times*-specific reporting rules and a variety of other problems have

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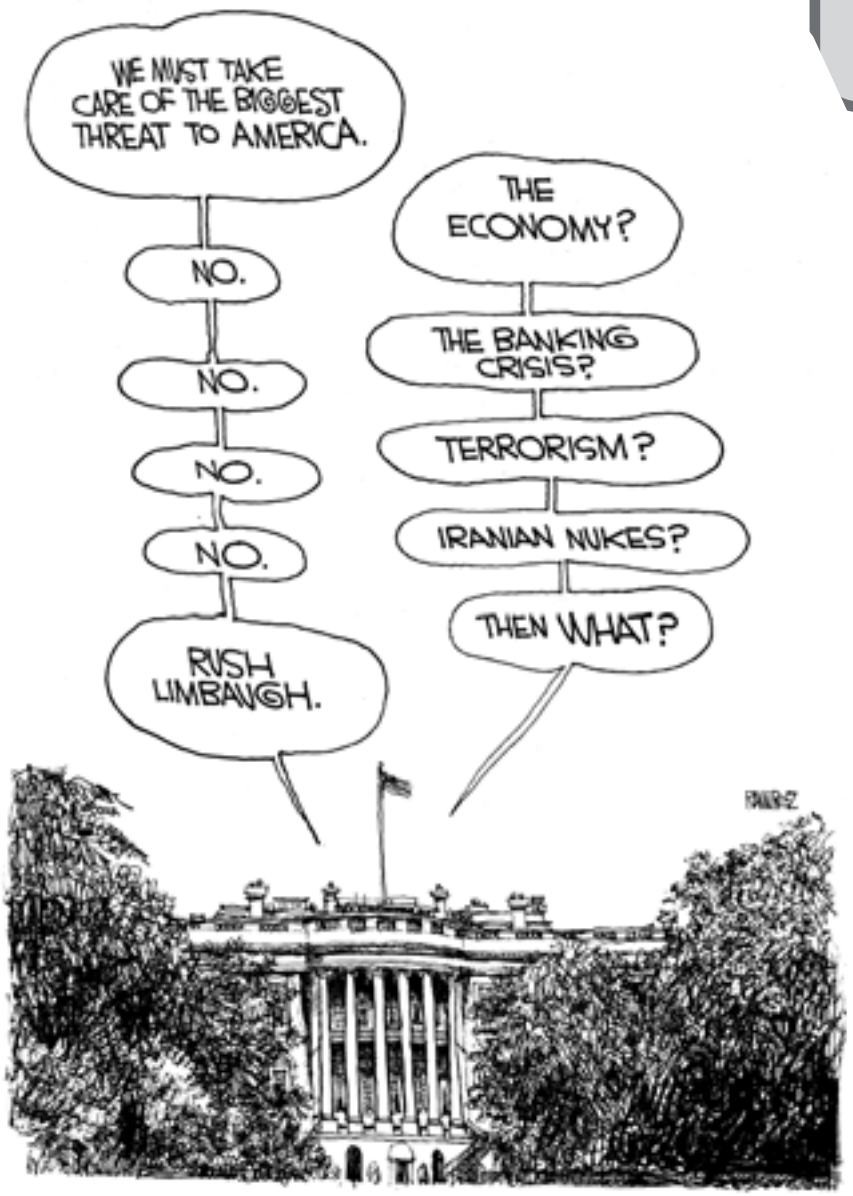

repeatedly found their way to my office over the past 18 months."

One can see how that might happen with a freelancer who writes once for the paper. How is it, though, that the *Times* has managed to ignore violations on the part of a frequent contributor that have more than once been brought to its attention? We are assuming, for the sake of argument, that a code of conduct as "complex" as the *Times*'s presumably disbars a writer who commits the cardinal journalistic sin of passing off the work of others as his own.

But maybe it doesn't. The *Nation*, in its latest issue, revisits the case of Jacob Heilbrunn, whose 2008 book on neoconservatism, *They Knew They Were Right*, includes several passages lifted without attribution from other writers. Here, for instance, is a passage from Heilbrunn:

> On April 30, 1981, [Reagan] remarked, "Even at the negotiating table, never shall it be forgotten for a moment that wherever it is taking place in the world, the persecution of people for whatever reason . . . persecution of people for their religious belief . . . that is a matter to be on that negotiating table or the United States does not belong at that table." But the *New York Times* reported on the same day that "after the speech, a White House spokesman said Mr. Reagan had not meant to alter his policy of playing down the rights issue in foreign relations."

And here is Patricia Derian, in a November 7, 1981, article for the *Nation*:

> On April 30, the *New York Times* quoted President Reagan as having said that "even at the negotiating table, never shall it be forgotten for a moment that wherever it is taking place in the world, the persecution of people for whatever reason . . . persecution of people for their religious belief . . . that is a matter to be on that negotiating table or the United States does not belong at that table." In the same edition of the *Times*, a front-page story reported that "after the speech, a White House spokesman said Mr. Reagan had not meant to alter his policy of playing down the rights issue in foreign relations."

This is the *Nation*'s second bite at the apple. Reviewer Corey Robin first called attention to Heilbrunn's lapses last June. The *Times* has published Heilbrunn, a "regular contributor," seven times since then, with nary a word of explanation as to how he has managed to skate around its "complex code" of conduct. The *Nation* concludes that "there's still nothing like failing upward," and THE SCRAPBOOK must say it finds itself, for once, in full agreement with the left-wing weekly. ♦

Sentences We Didn't Finish

'Barney Frank, the thoughtful chairman of the House Financial Services Committee, . . . " (Sebastian Mallaby, *Washington Post*, March 2). ♦

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Casual

All Barack, No Bite

For a while, I thought I was on the long slide into sad, sagging middle age, but it turns out I was wrong. My neighbors seemed to be losing interest in me, looking past me, drifting away. You know how it is. One morning you'll bump into a neighbor you've seen taking afternoon walks in the park. He'll be eating his breakfast in the corner bakery, and you'll try to make small talk, lighten things up a little. "Ever had a colonoscopy?" you'll say, and it's almost as if he didn't hear you.

Of course, this sense that I've lost the old conversational magic is all in my head. People aren't really drifting away. I've realized in the course of the last couple of weeks that I have the old charisma back. Suddenly people are eager to see me. They stop me on the street. Our neighborhood is a prideful and snobby one, though, and most people feel they need a pretext for being friendly. Lately they have been feigning interest in our 10-week-old puppy. Our 10-week-old Portuguese Water Dog puppy.

"My God! My God! Mom! Look!" a girl said when I walked the dog through the schoolyard the other day. "It's the kind of dog Malia and Sasha are getting! It's so beautiful!"

Our neighborhood is, by Washington standards, not exactly an Obama hotbed. You see just as many "War Is Not the Answer" signs as you do Obama signs, and there is even said to be a guy on the other side of Rittenhouse Street who didn't vote for Obama, although I think he moved. But the news that the Obamas are hoping to get a Portuguese Water Dog at the dog pound has traveled around the neighborhood quickly. Quite by accident, we have acquired the trendiest breed of dog on the planet. It's like having a Prius that barks.

We, too, had originally planned to get a dog at the pound. There are two types of dogs you see frequently at animal shelters—the confused little thing who cowers in the corner of his stall and the barking, bug-eyed Rottweiler who has been in a state of high-strung panic since his owner, who was probably called something like El Colombiano, got carted off to jail after a gunfight. But the vast majority of dogs in pounds are just dogs—lovable, friendly, loyal, eager dogs. We were ready to take one home when I began to wheeze and weep and break out in a rash. That was a sign we needed to get a hypoallergenic dog.

KRISTINA BAKER / THE WEEKLY STANDARD

So we decided on a Portuguese Water Dog for reasons similar to the Obamas'. Unlike the Obamas, we came to the conclusion that that put an end to our plans of getting it at the pound. In theory, you might find a Portuguese Water Dog in a pet shelter, in the same way that, in theory, you might find a Shakespeare first folio at Second Story Books or the Shroud of Turin on a hanger at your local consignment shop. But it's not the first place you'd look. Maybe it's different for presidents.

There are only about 8,000 Portuguese Water Dogs in the United States, and people are really, really eager to own them. Deciding you want one generally means going to a breeder, putting down a deposit, waiting weeks or months for the breeder to select a stud, and then waiting for the mother to deliver, all the while fending off questions from your kids, who suspect you're pulling a fast one on them, the way you did with that allergy yarn down at the pet shelter. Most dog-lovers would rather forgo those months of dogless purgatory. People who absolutely must have a Portuguese Water Dog are unlikely to ditch at the shelter a pet they've already sacrificed so much for.

Having a Portuguese Water Dog is, I imagine, like being a member of the castle-owning English gentry during tourist season—you're constantly running into people who know more about a member of your family than you do. I'll be walking down the street and someone will tell me that my dog is descended from dogs bred by Portuguese fishermen to shimmy up ropes. The bit about the fishermen is true. The bit about the ropes I'll believe when I see. From the evidence we've gathered thus far it's more likely they were bred to gnaw on furniture.

She is a beauty, though, a great companion and a smart girl. When a crowd gathers around me (whether for the conversation or for the opportunity to pet the dog I have no way of knowing), I explain that we did not get her just because we wanted to be like the Obamas. "Well, why'd you name her 'Change' then?" some wiseacre will ask. Come on. There are probably lots of dogs named Change. And Yes-We-Can would have been kind of a mouthful.

Christopher Caldwell

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Crime and Police

I wish I could support William Stuntz's argument that more police would cut crime ("Law and Disorder," February 23). Unfortunately, he neglects to discuss any of the studies (by William Spelman, Steven Levitt, and others) that show that imprisonment by itself accounts for one-fourth or more of the crime reduction we have experienced. And he does not deal with the studies (mine included) that suggest that it is how police are deployed, and not how many exist, that affects crime rates. This latter fact may explain why the crime rate has fallen sharply in Los Angeles, under Bill Bratton's leadership, even though the number of LAPD officers has grown only slightly. And he does not provide any real reason for thinking that the 100,000 officers hired under President Clinton's plan actually affected crime rates independently of other changes. Stuntz has a serious and commendable interest in crime, but his solution is not well supported.

James Q. Wilson
Pepperdine University
Malibu, Calif.

William J. Stuntz responds: Wilson is a giant in this field; I'm sorry he disagrees with my article. Also a little surprised. Steven Levitt, whose work Wilson mentions and endorses, takes exactly the opposite of the position Wilson's letter takes: Levitt's classic article on the subject concludes that increased police numbers were a major factor in the 1990s crime drop, and that changed police tactics were not. I suspect both numbers and tactics mattered—just as they mattered to the success of the surge in Iraq.

Blessings in Disguise?

Fred Barnes's article on unionization ("Summers Knows Best," March 2) is right on target. If Obama is serious about a post-partisan and pragmatic government, he will abandon union demands altogether and actually help the worker.

But developments such as "card check" are actually blessings in disguise for those of us who have argued for years that labor unions have objectives that are quite different from those they claim to protect. What better way to contrast the interests of the worker and the goals of the union than by offering a plan that forbids workers from secret balloting? Rather than being able to vote their conscience, workers would (through involuntary paycheck deductions) pay union bosses to harass and intimidate them for unwelcome but honest votes—all with presidential sanction.

It's a sin, really. But it shows that the Obama administration, for all the talk of being for labor, was only for *big* labor—you know, the kind with all that campaign money—rather than for the little workers, without whom America could not survive.

One hopes that the strangely plain cynicism of the card check law will finally clarify in the minds of voters what it means when a politician claims to be "pro-labor."

Peter G. Byrnes Jr.
Millersville, Md.

Rev. Wright's Colleague

Meghan Clyne writes, "With Wright, Obama could at least argue that his affiliation with the pastor was a personal matter of private faith. Yet by appointing Moss, Obama has given him the imprimatur of the White House and a position from which to help shape public policy" ("Remember Rev. Wright?" February 23).

During the campaign, many of us argued that Obama's history with Wright would lead to the mainstreaming of Wright or Wright's ideology. As you explain, the mainstreaming of Wright's ideology is now a *fait accompli*. This is a great tragedy for America and Christianity.

John Marshall
St. Petersburg, Fla.

The Bard and Lincoln

I enjoyed Edwin M. Yoder Jr.'s celebration of Lincoln's rhetorical skills ("Lincoln the Rhetor," February 16). Just as Milton patronized Shakespeare as a rough-and-ready Stratford rube whose splendid rhetoric is "native woodnotes wild," so do many denigrate Lincoln, with his sketchy education, as some untutored genius whose speeches were somehow natural effusions of a great spirit. Yoder knows better: Lincoln's works are products of study, discipline, and skilled adaptation of classical models, as Garry Wills's superb analysis of the Gettysburg Address also demonstrates. One quibble: In his example of *idem in alio*, Yoder mistakenly attributes the lamentation of guilty blood on the hands to Lady Macbeth, when it is her husband who expresses the hyberbolic remorse.

Mitch Sutterfield
Fairfax, Va.

Edwin M. Yoder Jr. responds: I am grateful for Mr. Sutterfield's approval, and he is right about the *idem in alio*. I was hearing echoes of Lady Macbeth's "Out damned spot . . . What, will these hands ne'er be clean? . . . All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand," and confused her lines with Macbeth's.

• • •

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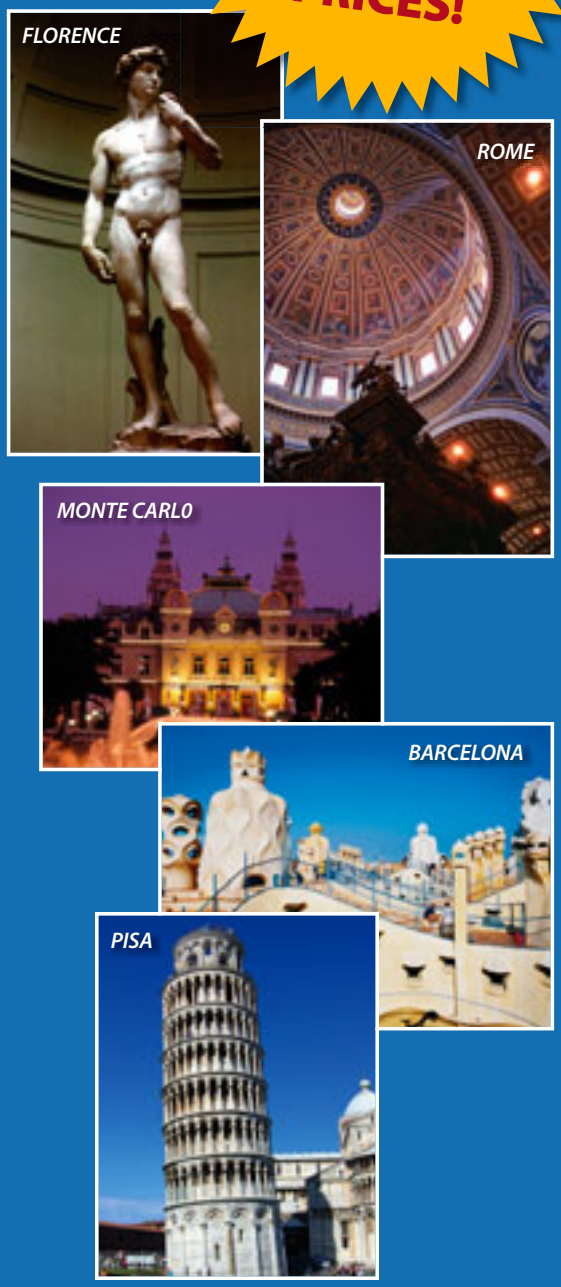

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Second Thoughts

At 12:01 P.M. on January 20, 2009, minutes before Barack Obama was sworn in as president, the first post went up on the Obama White House website. It included a reiteration of a campaign promise Obama repeatedly made: "President Obama has committed to making his administration the most open and transparent in history."

Two days later, Obama ordered the detention facility at Guantánamo Bay closed. And two days after that, on January 24, *Newsweek*'s Michael Isikoff wrote about a Pentagon study that will provide an early test of this promise: "The report, which could be released within the next few days, will provide fresh details about 62 detainees who have been released from Guantánamo and are believed by U.S. intelligence officials to have returned to terrorist activities."

The report was not, in fact, released within the next few days. On February 2, Commander Jeffrey Gordon, the Pentagon spokesman who handles inquiries about Guantánamo, told us that the report would likely be released later that day. We were told to consult the website—defenselink.mil—that afternoon. No report. When we asked where it was, Commander Gordon wrote: "Nothing today, please check back with me in a couple days." We did. No report.

This pattern has repeated itself for a month. So what explains this failure to produce the report?

According to Gordon:

> there may be a misunderstanding between when the updated threat analysis was delivered from DIA and the completion of an interagency review process prior to public release.
>
> My understanding is that several requests have been received by our OSD FOIA office and it is being processed for a decision concerning release. If you would like to submit a FOIA request as well, below is a link for your convenience.

Right. So a report that was to have been released on February 2 was suddenly and inexplicably withheld.

The most transparent administration in history apparently realized that releasing a report about the recidivism of Guantánamo detainees could only complicate its effort to shut down the facility. The approximately 247 detainees still held there are the worst of the terrorists captured by the United States since 9/11. Those thought to have been low-risk releases have already been let go. And many of them turned out not to have been low-risk at all. Saudi Arabia recently published a list of its 85 most wanted terrorists; 11 of them had been detained at Guantánamo Bay.

Said Ali al-Shihri, who disappeared from his home in Saudi Arabia after spending months in a Saudi jihad rehabilitation program, recently showed up in a video posted on a jihadist website. He is now the deputy leader of al Qaeda's Yemeni branch, which bombed the American embassy in Sana'a in September 2008. That attack killed 13 civilians, as well as six terrorists.

Mohammed Naim Farouq was released from Gitmo in July 2003. In 2006, the Defense Intelligence Agency listed him as one of the 20 most wanted terrorists operating in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Abdullah Saleh al Ajmi, a Kuwaiti, was detained at Gitmo, released, and then blew himself up in Mosul, Iraq, in March 2008. The attack killed 13 Iraqi soldiers and wounded dozens more.

Ibrahim Bin Shakaran and Mohammed Bin Ahmad Mizouz were both transferred from Guantánamo to Morocco in July 2004. In September 2007, they were convicted of being recruiters for Al Qaeda in Iraq.

These are detainees that the U.S. government determined were good candidates for release. The ones who remain in Guantánamo are not. "In some cases, we do know that they'll return to the battlefield because they've told us they will," says Juan Zarate, counterterrorism czar in the Bush White House.

The question for the new president and his advisers is what is an acceptable level of risk. "They may say 'These guys are dangerous but it's better than keeping them,'" says Zarate. But "the government needs to be very clear and honest about who these guys are and take any such step to release them with our eyes wide open."

Being clear and honest means sharing with Congress and the American public as much information as possible. Democratic senator Joseph Lieberman is calling for the report's release: "We know that a number of detainees who have been released have returned to the battlefield to attack Americans and American interests abroad. The American people need to know what is in the report so that Congress can make an informed decision on what to do with the detainees currently held at Guantánamo and with combatants captured in the future in the war on terror."

Even George W. Bush did better. In June 2008, the Pentagon released a partial list of recidivist Guantánamo alumni. Is it the case that the Obama administration, just six weeks in, is not even as transparent as the super-secretive Bush administration?

—Stephen F. Hayes & Thomas Joscelyn

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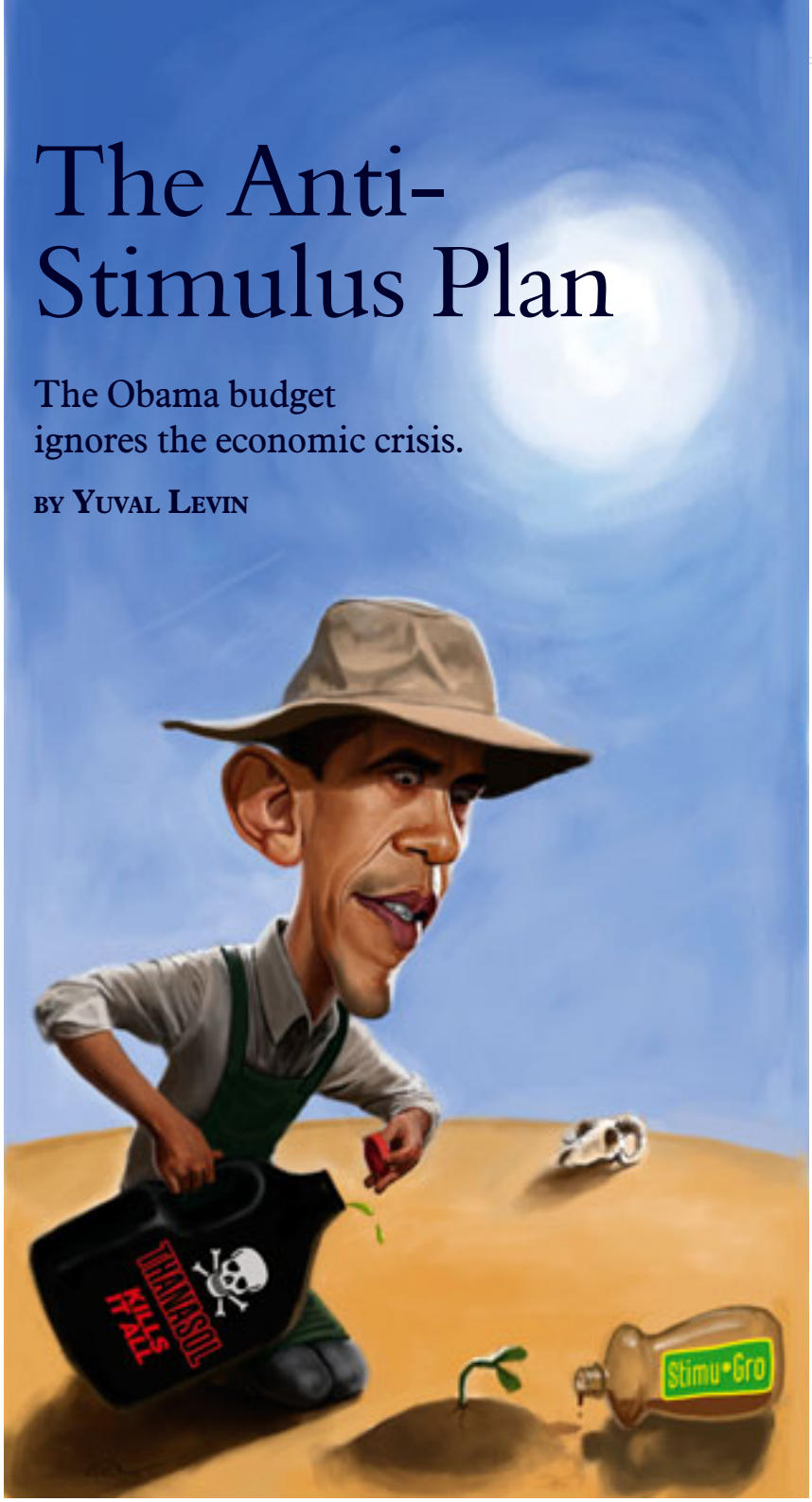
The Anti-Stimulus Plan

The Obama budget ignores the economic crisis.

BY YUVAL LEVIN



PAUL MOYSE

Last September, during the first presidential debate between Barack Obama and John McCain, moderator Jim Lehrer asked Obama what the growing economic crisis would mean for his policy ambitions: "What are you going to have to give up, in terms of the priorities that you would bring as president of the United States, as a result of having to pay for the financial rescue plan?" Obama's answer was so evasive that Lehrer asked him if he really meant to say that essentially nothing would change.

Over the past two weeks, we have seen something of a reiteration of that answer in practice. Obama indeed meant that no part of his agenda would be given up to pay for the economic recovery. On the contrary, recovery efforts will be undercut in favor of the new administration's sweeping liberal ambitions.

The stimulus plan enacted last month came under fire for its many flaws and excesses. But the debate about the plan was a debate about how best to stimulate the economy. Both sides essentially called for throwing money at the public; the Democrats preferred vast new government spending and the Republicans deep if temporary tax cuts. Both sought to use the crisis to advance their preferred political vision, but both sought to do so in ways addressed to some of the real economic problems at hand.

The Democratic plan that was signed into law was an incoherent wasteful mess, but it is likely to stimulate the economy some. It could be (as it often was) sold as something like the New Deal: an ambitious and ideologically laden response to a genuine economic crisis.

But the Obama administration's proposed 2010 budget, unveiled just a week after the stimulus plan was signed into law, cannot be advanced on such grounds. It is certainly ambitious and certainly ideologically laden, but it is not a response to the economic crisis. Rather, it denies the crisis and complicates the effort to combat it.

The budget offers an audacious array of technocratic initiatives aimed at transforming the relationship between Americans and their government and moving the country in the direction of European social democracy. It sets the stage for a vastly expanded federal role in the health insurance market—as one "option" among many to begin with, but with the help of price controls and the power to set rules of entry guaranteed to soon be the reigning, if not the only, option. It puts the federal government in command of a complex

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scheme of carbon-emission taxes and credits. It opens the way for a significantly increased federal role in education (including higher education).

These programs are not directed at the economic emergency, but are instead unrelated, enormous policy initiatives. They are not akin to the New Deal but to the Great Society initiatives of the mid-1960s, which were the outcome of a progressive worldview that wanted to change the character and role of government in American life. But the Great Society was not enacted in the midst of an economic crisis. It came in the middle of a lengthy and sustained period of growth and prosperity and was in part understood as a way to make use of the tax revenues flooding federal coffers. The kind of ambitious expansion of government Obama envisions requires similar economic growth.

Watching the market these days, and listening to economists' predictions (not to mention the president's own dire speeches before the enactment of the stimulus bill), you might think such growth is exceedingly unlikely in the short term. But the Obama budget simply assumes it will happen: predicting the economy will begin a sustained expansion this year and grow by 3.2 percent in 2010, 4 percent in 2011, and 4.6 percent in 2012.

Yet even as it assumes such a prompt and thorough recovery, the budget plants obstacles in its path. It raises taxes by a trillion dollars on the 2.5 million or so American taxpayers who earn above $200,000 a year (or $250,000 for a couple), and a further $646 billion through a proposed cap-and-trade system that, as administration officials have acknowledged, will be paid by all Americans through higher electricity bills.

The budget will double the national debt held by the public by 2015, and by 2019 the White House predicts that debt will equal 67 percent of the country's GDP (up from last year's 41 percent). Such spending ambitions send a signal about future tax and interest rates that can only depress investment.

And, most important, as it lays out its ambitious agenda, the Obama administration is doing little about the source of the economic calamity we confront: the banking and credit crisis. The budget includes a placeholder for further action but no particulars, and those have not been forthcoming from elsewhere so far. Amazingly, six weeks and two vast legislative proposals into his administration, the president has not said what action he will take to address the bad debt that has turned some of our largest banks into dead men walking and continues to debilitate our economy.

This combination of counterproductive action and baffling inaction only unnerves investors and is deeply anti-stimulative. The administration appears to have decided to look past the economic crisis and start spending the windfall of the coming recovery, even if that spending comes at the expense of the recovery itself. ♦

Can the GOP Come Back?

Yes, it can.

BY JAY COST

American politics is cruelly unforgiving. Political parties work assiduously to take control of the country's governing institutions. The task of governance, however, is an awful one: Eventually, the majority party is overwhelmed by our unruly system and is unceremoniously tossed from power. The party's initial triumph heralds its inevitable defeat. Republicans are learning this the hard way, and many are asking what the party should do now.

It is easy to overthink this question, as the answer is quite simple. The GOP must now be the loyal opposition, whose job it is to energetically, unapologetically pursue the majority, though never at the expense of the public good. That is how the GOP fulfills its continued responsibility to the country. The only way the people can hold the Democratic party accountable is if there is a robust opposition working tirelessly to become the people's first choice.

This means no whining, no complaining, no cursing the cruelty of American politics. There's too much work for the party to do.

As the GOP gets on with this process, here are five suggestions:

(1) *Ignore the determinists*. Both political parties have within their ranks oracles whose job is to use the last election to predict that their party will win all future ones. Now that the Democrats have finally triumphed, their oracles are patting themselves on the back and proclaiming that this Democratic majority will be permanent.

I have looked at my fair share of vote returns over the years—and I have never seen what the oracles see. Old victories don't imply future ones. The prophets always overlook a key factor: *The parties respond*. When a party in the majority is reduced to minority status—it retools, reinvents, and revives. It actively works to undermine whatever seemingly permanent voting coalition the other side has created.

For instance, Ronald Reagan stole

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rural southern whites from the Democrats to win in 1980 and 1984. Bill Clinton stole them back in 1992 and 1996, only to have George W. Bush steal them again in 2000 and 2004. That's what parties do—they scheme to pick off the marginal voters in the opposition's coalition. Given the fact that control of at least one chamber of Congress or the presidency has changed hands six times in the last nine election cycles, I'd say that both parties have been pretty successful at this. The smart bet is for continued competitiveness.

(2) *Think beyond Bush.* To listen to some Democrats, you'd think that George W. Bush has destroyed the Republican party, American conservatism, or both. Please. The fact is that the Republican party was around long before George W. Bush, and will be around long after him. Simply put, the GOP is bigger than Bush.

Consider the Republican platform of 1860. That document couched its demand for free soil in the language of individual liberty. It demanded frugal governance. It called for the protection of settlers against the government and the expansion of private property via the Homestead Act. It advocated high tariffs to advance American business, and government support for a transcontinental railroad to facilitate the development of the nation.

Obviously, specific policies have changed since then, but contemplate them from a broader perspective: individual liberty, opposition to wasteful spending, protection of private property, pro-business policies, and the development of infrastructure to enhance economic growth. This sounds a lot like 21st-century Republicanism, and it is helpful to remember that the party of today has a connection to the party of the past.

Republicanism is bigger than any one individual. The GOP has prospered for more than 150 years because the country has had use for its principles. The party will prosper in the future because the country will have use for them once again. This is despite the fact that the GOP has had its share of unpopular leaders. The same goes for the Democrats. The country has had continued use for the Democratic party *despite* the unpopularity of Presidents Wilson, Johnson, and Carter.

(3) *Be creative.* There is value to the conversation now happening among intellectuals about where the GOP should go from here. But I'd suggest Republicans discuss their future with greater confidence in the party's core principles. There is no need to redefine them, or indulge in an existential "crisis of conservatism." Instead, now is the time for Republicans to use their principles creatively—to generate new and compelling solutions to public problems.

But that's not all. The GOP needs creative strategies to market those ideas. The biggest political problem the party faces is that the Democrats are fully in control of the national agenda. Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid decide what is and is not considered in Congress, and Barack Obama can use the bully pulpit to guide public discussion. If Republicans are not inventive in how they promote themselves, they are bound to end up on the backpage.

(4) *Don't be intimidated.* After two rough election cycles, the Republican party is now standing in opposition to a president whose job approval rating is in the low 60s. A little wobbliness is understandable—especially given that Barack Obama is a man whose rise has been so meteoric he seems unstoppable.

However, Republicans should not allow that to distract them from the job of the opposition. To that end, it is helpful to remember the lowlights of Obama's time on the national stage. Many have already forgotten how *messy* the Democratic primary was. Between Jeremiah Wright, "bitterness," defeats in key primaries, and some horrid debate performances—Obama at times looked downright unimpressive last year. He is, in short, a politician like any other. His approval numbers right now are strong—but that is why this is called the honeymoon period. Eventually, he will be judged on the performance of his government. If Republican skepticism about his economic policies turns out to be prescient, President Obama will be held accountable, and his numbers will drop.

(5) *Look to the House*. For decades, the House of Representatives was essentially inert. Democrats held commanding majorities for 40 years. All that changed in 1994 when the GOP netted 52 seats and control of the chamber. Twelve years later Republicans comforted themselves by thinking that the inherent stability of the House would ultimately save their majority. But it wasn't to be. In the last two cycles, the Democrats have netted 54 seats, and taken back control.

The last 15 years, control of the House has changed hands two more times than it did in the previous 40. Since 1992, a whopping 40 percent of all House seats have switched hands at least once. It might be that the House has moved closer to the Framers' original intent—as the body with "an immediate dependence on, and an intimate sympathy with, the people" (*Federalist* 52). If so, we should *not* expect Nancy Pelosi to be a "permanent" speaker.

It is too soon, of course, to say whether retaking the majority in 2010 is a feasible goal—but it is not too soon for the party to *act* like it is. The better prepared the GOP is, the better able it will be to capitalize on its opportunities. Practically speaking, this means GOP leaders should focus on developing a compelling public message, and recruiting attractive, high quality candidates.

How long will the GOP be in the minority? This is politics, so who can say? I would suggest, though, that Republicans should not dwell on the timetable. The party's job now is to be the loyal opposition, which implies an indefatigable pursuit of the majority. Rather than bemoan its current lowly state—which, in the grand scheme of American politics, was inevitable—the party should focus on reclaiming the power that it has lost. For consolation, they can always indulge in a little bit of advance *Schadenfreude*—the awful task of governance will eventually overwhelm the Democrats, too! ♦

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The Administration Kowtows

Are the Chinese people alone now?

BY ETHAN GUTMANN

Over the last three weeks, the Obama administration has sent three clear signals to the Chinese leadership.

First came the news that Chas Freeman would chair the National Intelligence Council. The former U.S. ambassador to Saudi Arabia and an adviser to CNOOC (the state-owned Chinese oil company), Freeman clearly fits the Chinese Communist party's idea of a four-year plan for American intelligence oversight. Just note Freeman's curious 2006 statement about the Tiananmen massacre. It is unacceptable "for any country to allow the heart of its national capital to be occupied by dissidents intent on disrupting the normal functions of government, however appealing to foreigners their propaganda may be." That particular trope was originally laid down by Henry Kissinger, and it's considered safe for public use. Freeman, though, took the argument to its logical conclusion, condemning the "ill-conceived restraint" and "overly cautious behavior" of the party leadership.

> I thus share the hope of the majority in China that no Chinese government will repeat the mistakes of Zhao Ziyang's dilatory tactics of appeasement in dealing with domestic protesters in China.

It's not hard to predict what line the intelligence community will take on China's military buildup (or another Tiananmen) under Freeman's leadership.

The Chinese will score their number two victory with Gary Locke, former governor of Washington, becoming our new commerce secretary. Locke's been a very—very!—good Friend of China: making public displays of affection for the party's brilliant stewardship, carrying a torch for China in the Beijing Olympics relay, and easily straddling his public and private interests to make a deal. Locke has paraded his *guanxi*—his connections—and, indeed, his numerous meetings with Hu Jintao are real. As are the campaign funds he got in the 1990s through Buddhist temple fundraisers, Chinese cut-outs, and confessed felon John Huang. This may have knocked Locke out of contention for a spot on the Gore 2000 ticket, but apparently it was of little interest to Obama's third-time-lucky vetting staff in 2009.

To complete the hat trick, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton made a seemingly offhand comment on the eve of her recent trip to Beijing. Discussion of Taiwan, Tibet, and human rights would be "on the agenda," she said. But "We pretty much know what they are going to say." Some commentators have labored to present those words as refreshingly plainspoken. Bringing up human rights to the Chinese government is just an empty ritual the argument goes, and America has larger interests at the moment—China's purchase of treasury bonds, a "partnership" on green technologies—which speak to a much broader, "global" definition of human rights.

But rituals, and the spirit in which they are carried out, matter very much to the Chinese leadership. Chinese citizens, particularly those who dissent, pay close attention as well. Even if Clinton has tired of Chinese human rights (in the old-fashioned definition, where people are tortured to death and so on), the act of unilaterally agreeing to ignore an actual source of tension between our two societies represents a notable change in U.S. policy. The repercussions will extend far into Taiwan, China, and America.

Taiwan, in particular, faces trouble. China's internal crisis of collapsing exports and exploding unemployment would squelch any tendency toward foreign adventurism in most societies. But the Chinese government remains perfectly willing to go to war if they can unify the population and extend the party's control. Its objectives are clear. It wants to prevent Taiwan from being becoming the locus of the Chinese diaspora's resistance. The Chinese reward Taiwanese single-party rule with economic favors to prevent any onset of the democracy cancer when Taiwan is absorbed into the Chinese bloodstream. The current Taiwanese leadership is playing into the scenario by expanding economic contacts, attempting to wring the last Renminbi from the mainland, while intently working over their discredited opposition party to the last man.

As the first viable Chinese democracy in history drifts into genuine peril, it cannot rely on the U.S. president who appears to dislike even using the D-word and needs Chinese cash for his own internal adventurism. The Chinese have an estimated $2 trillion in foreign exchange reserves.

On the mainland, the Obama administration is giving the party a free hand exactly when they need it. The party must keep disparate forces—labor groups, Falun Gong, Christians, democracy advocates—isolated from one another. The tool is surveillance—using the Internet, phones, indeed, any electronic device that can track humans. (Many of these technologies originally came from American companies.) Once dissenters are arrested, the party needs to squelch any legal defense. Dissident lawyer Gao Zhisheng, freshly out of

Ethan Gutmann, an adjunct fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, is completing a book on the conflict between the Chinese state and Falun Gong.

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detention after severe torture, recently disappeared again.

Organ harvesting—particularly if the liver, kidneys, and corneas are surgically removed while a prisoner is alive—creates a foreign currency stream for the military. For the Chinese state it also solves a problem: Approximately 100,000 incarcerated Falun Gong, and an unspecified number of Eastern Lightning (Christians) will not give up their beliefs. Release is impossible; they are dangerous enemies of the state. In the marriage of the New China's capitalism and the party's unchanging authoritarianism, organ harvesting has become a profitable form of barbarism.

The last time an administration gave such an explicit green light to the Chinese leadership was three weeks after the Tiananmen Square massacre. George H.W. Bush sent National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft and Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger to Beijing to reassure the Chinese. Again, the message was that human rights and democracy didn't really matter, only business, only partnership. (That Scowcroft had to deliver it in secret, though, is another sign of how far things have deteriorated.) When this became public some months later, many conservatives broke ranks and some liberals joined them in creating a firestorm of criticism for the administration's policy.

And today? Nancy Pelosi cut her teeth on China human rights, but she won't break ranks without sustained pressure. Amnesty International has made some noises about Clinton's comments. To a lesser extent, so have Freedom House, Reporters Without Borders, and Human Rights Watch. But it's not nearly enough. And where are the AFL-CIO, the academy, and the sweatshop coalitions?

Human rights in China. Democracy in China. These are things that the Obama administration wants nothing to do with. Are the Chinese people on their own now? ♦

The New Blacklist

Freedom of speech—unless you annoy the wrong people. BY MAUREEN MULLARKEY

Strange times we live in when it takes a ballot initiative to confirm the definition of marriage as the union of a man and a woman. Stranger still when endorsing that definition through the democratic process brings threats and reprisals.

In November, the *San Francisco Chronicle* published the names and home addresses of everyone who donated money in support of California's Proposition 8 marriage initiative. All available information, plus the amount donated, was broadcast. My name is on that list.

Emails started coming. Heavy with epithets and ad hominems, most in the you-disgust-me vein. Several accused me, personally, of denying the sender his single chance at happiness after a life of unrelieved oppression and second-class citizenship. Some were anonymous but a sizable number were signed, an indication of confidence in collective clout that belied howls of victimhood. New York's *Gay City News* asked for an interview because I was "one of only four New Yorkers who contributed more than $500."

I ignored the request, trashed the emails, and forgot about them. But the West Coast bureau chief of the *New York Daily News* did not forget.

One night in early February, I drove home to find two cars, two men, waiting for me, unannounced, in the dark. Reporters for the *Daily News*, they were publishing a story on me and Prop 8 the next day and wanted a live quotation. Serious interviews are arranged ahead of time. Besides, I had filed enough newspaper pieces on deadline to know that copy is well into the can at 7 P.M. This was intimidation, not fact-gathering.

Where is the story, I asked, if I have not said anything? The response was: "We have documents." Sound familiar? For half a second, I thought of saying that Prop 8 left intact all the legal advantages of civil union. It took nothing away. But I was too surprised by having been singled out. After a few heated words—none of them equal to what, in hindsight, I wish I had said—I went into the house.

Next day, I discovered in the *Daily News* that I am known as a painter of gays and lesbians; gay activists felt betrayed by my contribution. It was a sparse article. The only accurate quotation to appear was a sentence cribbed from my own website, which seems to be the "document" from which the story was spun. (The sentence, from an old interview about a gallery show of my paintings, referred to New York's gay pride parade as "an erotic celebration loosed for a day to keep us all mindful that Dionysus is alive, powerful and under our own porch.") Compensating for the interview that never took place, the reporter constructed an exchange over the question he obviously wanted to ask but never got the chance. The article reads:

> When asked how she could have donated money to fight gay marriage after making money from her depictions of gays, she just said, "So?"

Set aside the non sequitur. The question was an undisguised indictment that triggered a barrage of virulent mail and threats of blacklisting. Suddenly, I was "a vampire on the gay community" who should be put out

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of business. As one note put it: "Your career is over, you nasty piece of s—. F— off! WHORE!"

To make sense of this, backspace to the early '90s and a series of paintings I exhibited called *Guise & Dolls*. It was a singular body of work based on images from New York's annual carnival, the gay pride parade. I could have used a New Orleans Mardi Gras or Munich's Fasching, but Manhattan was closer. At times funny and poignant, the parade was also—in the age of AIDS—tinged with sexual danger. The spectacle of it made a splendid analogy to the medieval *danse macabre*.

Festive misrule and the politics of carnival, deeply rooted in cultural history, are a compelling motive for painting. Think of Bruegel the Elder's *Fight Between Carnival and Lent*. The flamboyant Dionysian heart of the gay pride parade was the subject of *Guise & Dolls*, not homosexuality itself and certainly not any policy agenda. A public event free for the watching, it is staged to provoke audience response. I responded with a suite of paintings; they bore no relation to my prior or subsequent work. All suggestion that I "make a living on the back of the gay community," as my mail insisted, was a hysterical fantasy brewed in the grievance industry's fever swamp.

But no matter. I was up there now with Halliburton and Big Oil, a class enemy. The brownshirts came out in force. Within 24 hours, the "story" spread from one gay website to another, even to Vancouver ("Typical greedy American bigot"), France, and Belgium. My home address and email were repeated in comment sections in which readers egged each other on to "make the bitch pay." Militants trawled for editors and gallerists I had worked with to warn them that "the Gay Community is looking at our adversaries and those who may support them." (One former editor blind-copied me his exchange with an aspiring storm trooper who threatened a boycott for those "having an association" with me.)

Reprimands flooded in, all based on the false premise that fat slices of proprietary gay imagery were being creamed off the urban spectacle for my personal profit:

You should apologize for your deceit. Stop using us as your subject matter in this incredibly exploitative manner. You must realize that your actions are no different than an artist depicting the black community contributing to white supremacist organizations.

How dare you use gay people as inspiration and then stab these people in the back by fighting to limit their rights. You are a disgusting, pitiful, opportunistic bitch.

Conceptual clarity is not mobthink's strong suit:

I don't understand why you would want to deny love in this world, no matter what form it takes. I can't imagine your motives, can't imagine your hate.

Our parades are not the only place you can fulfill your artistic vision. . . . You could visit the Hasidic community. You know, them? They wear "unusual" clothes, too. There are so very many freak shows you can enjoy in this world.

The prevailing mood was punitive:

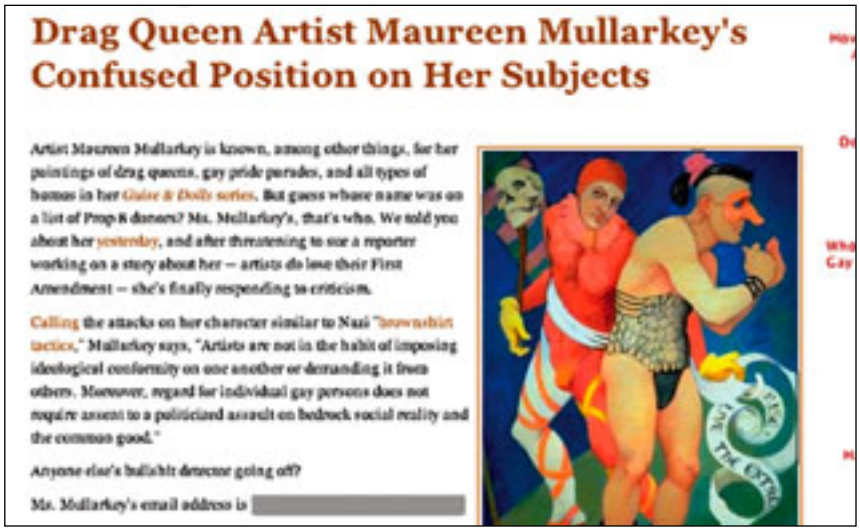
Homosexuals rule the World of Creativity, and that is whom you just f—ed with!

You represent the most despicable type of artist and human being. I do hope that you feel the financial pain your actions will bring. May God bless you with financial ruin for your treacherous deed.

Because I love delusional bigots, I hope you never see another dime, bitch.

The president and CEO of an executive travel agency cc'd his message to a curator at the Brooklyn Museum: "You are a disgusting TURD of a woman to support Prop 8." One painter, whose work I had reviewed enthusiastically months before, rushed to her blog to broadcast an open letter exposing my perfidy to the New York gallery world:

The grave ungood you have done is not only to us, lesbians and gays who expect no less than full civil rights in our own country, but ironically to your own art career. Unless you don't mind showing at Reverend Rick's or perhaps at Brigham Young University.


Drag Queen Artist Maureen Mullarkey's Confused Position on Her Subjects

Artist Maureen Mullarkey is known, among other things, for her paintings of drag queens, gay pride parades, and all types of homos in her Guise & Dolls series. But guess whose name was on a list of Prop 8 donors? Ms. Mullarkey's, that's who. We told you about her yesterday, and after threatening to sue a reporter working on a story about her – artists do lose their First Amendment – she's finally responding to criticism.

Calling the attacks on her character similar to Nazi "brownshirt tactics," Mullarkey says, "Artists are not in the habit of imposing ideological conformity on one another or demanding it from others. Moreover, regard for individual gay persons does not require assent to a politicized assault on bedrock social reality and the common good."

Anyone else's bullshit detector going off?

Ms. Mullarkey's email address is

Queerty.com weighs in on the controversy.

A local paper followed up the *Daily News* piece. I submitted a brief statement to the reporter affirming the time-honored definition of marriage. I took care to note that regard for individual gay persons does not require assent to a politicized assault on bedrock social reality and the common good. The story disclosed other "suspect" donations of mine (to pro-life groups and, most damning, to the Swift Boat vets) and referred to my Catholicism. That prompted a fellow painter, and heretofore friendly colleague, to write:

At first I thought there should be a special place in hell for people like you. But then I thought, maybe purgatory! A dull, nothing kind of Catholic nowhere. Just like you!

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The religious note struck various chords. Rick0564 wrote: "If God makes us Gay, then please let us love one another through marriage. It's what Jesus would do." Tina K inquired: "If I believed that Catholics should not vote, and managed to get a proposition passed to that effect, would that be fair to you?"

Ah, Tina, my opposition to same-sex marriage does not originate in the pew. However much sympathy, affection—indeed, love—I have for certain gay persons, "gay marriage" burlesques a primal institution rooted in nature. Marriage, as a unique bond between male and female, predates all politics and religious doctrines. And no one has to believe in God to see social anarchy, with children adrift in the wreckage, at the end of the same-sex marriage road.

But any semblance of moral reasoning is lost on a mob. The character and sensibility of the same-sex marriage brigades is told in their litany of sexual hostility:

Eat shit and die, c—.
Eat c— and die, bitch.
You right-wing, heterosupremacist t—.
You are the moral equivalent of a Jewish Nazi. Roast in hell, you filthy c—.

It is one thing to read hate-filled mail on a computer screen. It is something else to have it in hand. At the end of the week, when it started coming to my house, I filed a police report.

Until now, donating to a cause did not open private citizens to a battery of invective and jackboot tactics. While celebrities sport their moral vanity with white ribbons, thousands of ordinary Americans who donated to Prop 8 are being targeted in a vile campaign of intimidation for having supported a measure that, in essence, ratified the crucial relation between marriage and childbearing. Some in California have lost their jobs over it; others worry about an unhinged stranger showing up at the door.

Who was it who predicted that if fascism ever came to the United States, it would come in the guise of liberal egalitarianism? ♦

The Not-So-Great Game

Obama goes AWOL on Afghanistan.

BY TOM DONNELLY, TIM SULLIVAN & RAPHAEL COHEN

In between his many appearances touting the stimulus package and the restructuring of the nation's financial institutions, housing markets, and automobile industry, Barack Obama made his first serious decision as America's commander in chief on February 17. He ordered an additional 17,000 U.S. troops to Afghanistan. In all likelihood, it's just the first installment of an Afghan "surge"—the U.S. and NATO commander in Kabul, General David McKiernan, has been asking for at least 30,000 more troops—but it raises four important questions.

First and foremost, will Obama rally Americans to support another long-running counterinsurgency effort? Despite his campaign rhetoric about Afghanistan being the "right war," Obama has been remarkably passive in setting the course of Afghan policy since taking office. If there's one lesson of the Bush years that Obama should not ignore it's that you cannot delegate war policy. You can't be just a "decider."

The White House has, moreover, been downplaying military issues at every turn. The troop deployment announcement was made by press release. Obama's Sort-of State of the Union address made only passing reference to war policy—other than the decision to close the Guantánamo detention facility. The president has been entirely diffident about discharging what the press release described as his most "solemn duty as President" in a "situation [that] demands urgent attention and swift action."

The Obama administration is already losing control of the narrative: The "good war" is well on its way to becoming another bad war. The tropes of the Afghanistan-as-the-graveyard-of-empires and Vietnam-revisited are back. In recent months, predictions of quagmire have moved from the Joe Klein fringe to the Evan Thomas mainstream. *Newsweek*'s February 21 cover story, headlined "Could Afghanistan Be Obama's Vietnam?" reflects the emerging establishment consensus. According to a recent *Washington Post*/ABC News poll, only one third of Americans said U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan should be increased. The same number believe levels should be reduced. Only Obama can reconcile Americans to the realities of the Afghanistan war, explaining that success is hard but not impossible. Even the most insightful counterinsurgency strategy will demand patience—time probably matters much more than troop levels.

Second, the president needs to better control his "Team of Rivals." It is a military truism that strategic clarity depends upon a well-defined decision-making process, on a "unity of command." This principle is absent in the present Afghanistan policy. To a certain extent, this is inherent to coalition warfare: General McKiernan as International Security Assistance Force commander reports to both NATO and to U.S. Central Command. Likewise, his subordinate commanders—be they British, German, Canadian—report to at least two bosses.

But Obama is making the muddle worse. Afghanistan policy is the prod-

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uct of a horse-by-committee termed "the Interagency." The president, members of his cabinet, the national security adviser and his staff, generals and viceroys, and a burgeoning number of bureaucrats all take part and bring divergent personal or institutional biases with them. Interagency policy reflects the State Department's desires to do traditional diplomacy, the Pentagon's concerns about force structure and "balancing risk," the intelligence and special operations operatives charged with prosecuting the global war on terrorism, the charter of development agencies to alleviate poverty, and so on. No one in Washington is, as yet, responsible for winning the war.

And these structural problems are hugely exacerbated by the herd of elephantine egos and personalities engaged. There are at least three four-star officers with different agendas: McKiernan, CENTCOM chief General David Petraeus, and Admiral Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The civilian side is even worse. Aside from the president himself, who has occasionally quipped that he's smarter than any of his advisers, there are the two poles of the new secretary of state and the old the secretary of defense. There's the national security adviser, Jim Jones, a former four-star general himself, who recently sounded like another four-star NSA, Alexander Haig, when he boasted to the *Washington Post* that he was in charge at the White House (even though Jones was in Munich at the time).

The Obama administration is also keen on ministers plenipotentiary and special envoys, with the new U.S. Special Envoy for Pakistan and Afghanistan, Richard Holbrooke, being the most special of all. He stands outside the traditional bureaucratic structures, and the great danger is that he will have lots of power but not so much responsibility. Foreign governments—Germany and Britain among them—remember the way in which Holbrooke dominated policymaking during the Balkans wars of the 1990s and want their own Holbrooke-equivalents in Afghanistan, if only to keep tabs on what the American is up to.

This multipolar decisionmaking world is a recipe for competition and confusion. There are at least three Afghanistan reviews underway: at the NSC by Bush-holdover "war czar" General Douglas Lute, at CENTCOM by Petraeus and many of the counter-insurgency experts who designed the Iraq surge, and by Mullen and the Joint Chiefs. These reviews, in turn, are to be reviewed by Bruce Riedel, a scholar at the Brookings Institution now working—at least temporarily—for Jones and the NSC. Whether he will bring clarity instead of further confusion is unclear; Riedel has written that he believes that settling the Israeli-Palestinian dispute is a key to success in Afghanistan and the war on terror.

The administration cannot afford to shape its policy toward Pakistan based simply upon the effects it hopes to achieve in Afghanistan; it must instead tackle Pakistan qua Pakistan.

Third, the administration needs to better define or, better yet, drop entirely the idea of "AfPak." This is the neologism for an emerging strain of conventional wisdom suggesting that for the United States to succeed in Afghanistan, it must first address the problems in the Pakistani border regions.

While there is no denying that the flow of weapons, resources, and fighters across the border into Afghanistan has complicated the U.S. mission there, Pakistan itself presents a range of strategic challenges of which the violence and extremism in its volatile tribal regions are only a symptom. As a nuclear-armed state with a weak civilian government, a politically powerful but malfunctioning military, and a population prone to extremism, Pakistan is strategically far more important to the United States than Afghanistan. The administration cannot afford to shape its policy toward Pakistan based simply upon the effects it hopes to achieve in Afghanistan; it must instead tackle Pakistan *qua* Pakistan, even as it pursues a comprehensive strategy for its neighbor. "AfPak" thinking will be wrongheaded about both countries.

Even if U.S. forces were able to stem entirely the flow of weapons and fighters, we would still have a robust indigenous Afghan insurgency on our hands. In the Pashtun belts of southern Afghanistan, in particular, much of the manpower behind the insurgency comes from local militants. The presence of criminal organizations and tribal militias throughout the country further complicates this volatile brew.

Conversely, the most immediate problems of Pakistan aren't confined to the border areas. The growing violence and extremism in the country's vast lawless territories aren't simply a problem for U.S. and allied forces in Afghanistan, they are a fundamental threat to Pakistan's survival, as militants move closer to the country's population centers. Thus far, the Pakistani government's responses have been haphazard and appear increasingly desperate. Over the past two years, the Pakistani army has been repeatedly defeated in conventional fights, by Taliban forces. The recent peace deal brokered by local officials and Taliban leaders in the Swat valley is further indication of the government's shrinking writ and testimony to the unpleasant military facts on the ground. The so-called "Malakand Accords" legitimate the rule of *sharia* law and *de facto* Taliban government in the region in return for a cease-fire among the roughly 2,000 fighters loyal to Taliban leader Maulana Fazlullah.

Much of Pakistan's dysfunction stems from the military's outsize role in governance and civil society. American engagement with the Pakistani army cannot simply be tactical or operational; it must be strategic and institutional. In the near term, the United States must discourage the Pakistani army from its heavy-handed counter-insurgency tactics and preference for conventional firepower. But the reason that the Pakistani army retains its con-

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ventional focus is that it remains a force whose structures and existence are justified by the threat of war with India. These problems—fear of India and the distorted societal role of the army—are larger and deeper problems that dwarf the problems of the border areas.

No matter the outcome in Afghanistan, the problems in Pakistan will persist. The United States, therefore, must be careful not to view its interests in the country simply through the lens of the Afghan conflict. Which leads to our fourth question.

Does the Obama administration have a coherent strategy for the whole region of which Afghanistan is just a part? This is an urgent need, reflected in the dangerous state of U.S. and NATO lines of communication. Several weeks ago, insurgents destroyed a key bridge in the Khyber Pass, the most important supply route from Pakistan into Afghanistan. A bombing in Pakistan also destroyed a group of vehicles due to be shipped north. Then the government of Kyrgyzstan, thanks to a not-so-subtle bribe from the Russians, announced that it will no longer allow the United States to use the critical air base at Manas. The Kyrgyz have long been trying to raise the rent on Manas, but the U.S. government appears to have been neglectful of the issue, allowing the Russians to make mischief.

We may be able to offer a larger bribe and reclaim Manas, although General Petraeus also recently visited Uzbekistan, where we first had basing rights until we were thrown out for calling attention to the brutalities of the Uzbek regime toward its own people. Add in Iran's desire to create a sphere of influence for itself in western Afghanistan and India's growing concerns about attacks from terror groups based in Pakistan, and the need for a more comprehensive U.S. strategy becomes even more apparent.

It's time for the president to provide political leadership and the strategic clarity for his "right war" and for this dangerous region. Thus far, he's been absent without leave. ♦

Obama's Global Warming Straddle

Lord, make me carbon neutral . . . but not yet.

BY MICHAEL GOLDFARB

In his February 24 address to Congress, President Obama asked for "legislation that places a market-based cap on carbon pollution." But don't assume that this administration, in contrast to its predecessor, is overly concerned about the threat to humanity from global warming.

When the president unveiled his budget later that week, it became clear that even if so-called cap-and-trade legislation is passed this year, the administration has no plans to start taxing emissions until 2012. A president who warned of catastrophe should Congress delay implementing his economic agenda seems in no particular rush to cut down on greenhouse emissions. No doubt he has been quietly briefed on just how devastating his cap-and-trade regime would be to a fragile economy.

So it's a hollow victory for climate alarmists. As it happens, besides being an election year, 2012 is also supposed to be the point of no return for action on climate change. Rajendra Pachauri, chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and co-recipient with Al Gore of the Nobel Peace Prize, warned after collecting his prize in Norway that "if there's no action before 2012, that's too late."

Last year Gore himself opined that "we have less than 10 years to make dramatic changes in our global warming pollution lest we lose our ability to ever recover from this environmental crisis." Such warnings have become routine—20 years ago, in 1989, the head of the New York office of the United Nations Environment Program, Noel Brown, issued the same dire prediction, claiming that there was a "10-year window of opportunity" to stop the runaway train of global warming.

After two decades in which environmentalists have urged immediate government action or else, a unified Democratic government has finally made such action possible—but it is, thankfully, not imminent or assured. The timing of any legislation will be determined by the political climate in Washington, and not the temperature in the Arctic.

Whatever else it accomplishes, cap and trade will be a huge tax on the productive sectors of the economy. The "cap" is a government-imposed limit on total emissions; companies then buy permits from the government to emit pollutants up to the amount of the cap, and can then trade these permits with each other. The process of issuing and pricing the permits will be an invitation to astonishing amounts of lobbying and favor-seeking. Cap and trade, in the words of MIT's Richard Lindzen, will be "a bureaucrat's dream."

According to a recently released study by the George C. Marshall Institute, the cost of cap and trade to the overall economy—depending on the size and scope of the legislation—is anywhere from a 0.3 percent to 3 percent drop in GDP in 2015 below what it would otherwise be. The report, as noted by the National Center for Policy Analysis, estimated that Americans would see their "electricity prices jumping 5-15 percent by 2015, natural gas prices up 12-50 percent by 2015, and gasoline prices up 9-145 percent by 2015." The numbers are staggering, which is why the Obama administration plans to divert some of the permit

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revenues to its "making work pay" tax credit, reimbursing low-income individuals up to $400 a year and $800 for couples. It won't be enough.

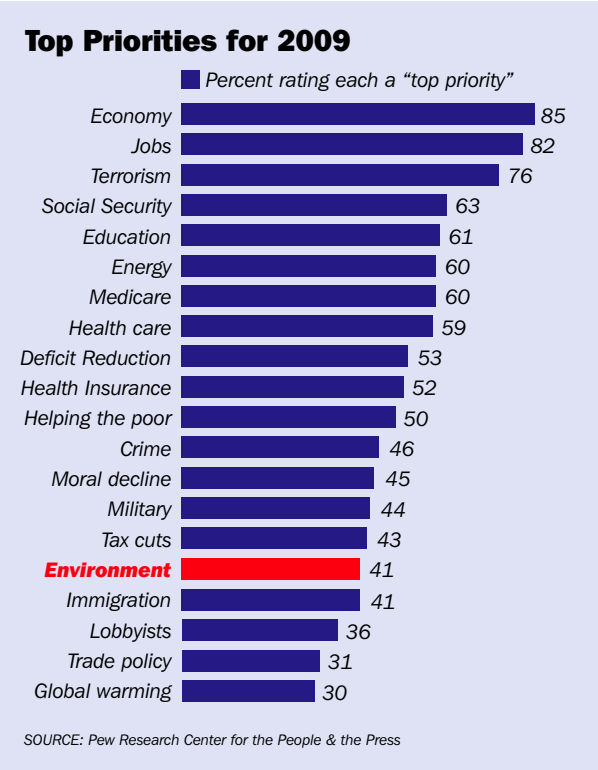
The Senate failed to pass cap-and-trade legislation in 2007—the Lieberman-Warner bill—which the Marshall Institute estimates would have cost each American household $1,100 in 2008, rising to $1,437 by 2015, and $2,979 in 2050. Obama's plan is far more ambitious, and would be a far greater burden to American taxpayers. The administration projects that the tax would raise some $650 billion for federal coffers between 2012 and 2019.

The other reason for not hurrying up with a carbon tax may well be that the science underlying climate-change alarmism has taken a beating. "It's been a catastrophic year" for global warming activists, says Christopher Horner of the Competitive Enterprise Institute, an industry-funded think-tank. All of a sudden, "the observations are very inconvenient."

In May 2008, *Nature* magazine published a peer-reviewed study that came to a startling conclusion: "Global surface temperature may not increase over the next decade, as natural climate variations in the North Atlantic and tropical Pacific temporarily offset the projected anthropogenic [manmade] warming."

Just as problematic, a few months prior to that report NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory revealed the results of a new study of ocean temperatures. "The oceans have not warmed up at all over the past four or five years," NPR reported, and "that could mean global warming has taken a breather." In fact, the oceans—like the rest of the planet—have cooled of late. The scientist overseeing the research protested that the cooling was "not anything really significant," and that the results shouldn't be interpreted as evidence against warming, but with surface temperatures and water temperatures declining, the case for a radical reining-in of industrial economies has become even weaker than it already was.

The public is right to be skeptical. According to a Pew poll released in the days following Barack Obama's inauguration, Americans rank "dealing with global warming" dead last among 20 policy priorities for this administration—just 30 percent believe it should be a top priority, 8 percentage points less than two years ago, and well behind such concerns as strengthening the military (44 percent), defending the United States against terrorism (76 percent), and strengthening the economy (85 percent).



Marc Morano, an aide to Senator Jim Inhofe (Capitol Hill's most notorious climate change skeptic), barrages the press daily with news stories and press releases casting further doubt on global warming. He thinks he's winning, and the numbers seem to confirm it. "The Earth has failed to warm," he says, and despite "all the money spent, the awards, the press, the chorus from Hollywood, it hasn't made a dent" in public opinion.

There's a poll for that, too. Last April, Gallup released numbers showing that just 37 percent of Americans worry "a great deal" about global warming, "a percentage that is roughly the same as the one Gallup measured 19 years ago." And if 37 percent sounds high, it's not. Out of 12 environmental problems Gallup polled, the 37 percent figure put global warming just third from the bottom, ahead of only urban sprawl and acid rain—a term that hasn't made a headline on the front page of the *New York Times* in nine years.

The skeptics may not be winning the debate in the media, but they're "winning the reality" according to Bjørn Lomborg, author of the bestseller *The Skeptical Environmentalist*. Lomborg points out that despite "tremendous amounts of worrying . . . if you look at actual reductions in CO_2 over the last few years, nothing." Lomborg isn't opposed to government action, but he derides cap-and-trade regimes as a way for politicians to "put on a tax and get people to think it's a cool thing."

But unlike Europe, which implemented its own cap-and-trade system in 2005, Americans don't seem to think taxes on carbon are particularly "cool." Warner-Lieberman fell a dozen votes short of cloture, with several Democrats crossing the aisle to help Republicans kill it. Morano says that if the Senate takes up the issue again, it could produce an "immigration-style shutdown" on the Hill.

Which is not to say that cap and trade can't be rammed through this year. There are a lot more Democratic votes than there were in 2007, as well as a popular president who seems to be giving the measure his full support. And whatever its effect on global levels of greenhouse gases, it will allow the federal government to "control every aspect of our economy," says Horner. In Obama's Washington, that's unfortunately a recommendation. ♦

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Enemies of the White House

Discontent is growing on the center-right.

BY FRED BARNES

President Obama isn't riding as high as he thinks. He's popular, though no more than is usual for a new president. His party is in charge on Capitol Hill, but its command of the Senate is fraying. And just last week, the faint outlines of a center-right coalition in opposition to Obama's policies—and increasingly to Obama himself—began to emerge. It's an embryonic grouping that may prove to be ephemeral. But maybe not.

Obama's situation is the same as Bill Clinton's in 1993. Clinton had run for president as a moderate, just as Obama ran as a pragmatic, rather than an ideological, liberal. But both turned sharply liberal once in the White House. Clinton alienated the political center by promoting a government-run health care plan, gays in the military, and midnight basketball as a crime-fighting tool. Obama is doing the same—at least he's starting to—with his bid to enact the most far-reaching and costly set of liberal programs since the New Deal.

If the political attitudes of Americans have been propelled to the left by the Obama campaign and the economic slump, as many liberals insist, the president should have little to worry about. But if America is still predominantly a moderate-to-conservative country, as I believe it is, then Obama may be fostering a stronger and more united gathering of opponents than he and his strategists imagine.

They look at Republicans and their cockiness is reinforced. Indeed, Republicans do appear anemic at the moment. Their new national chairman, Michael Steele, is off to an unimpressive start. Conservatives, the base of the party, are squabbling among themselves. But what Republicans do now is considerably less important than what Obama does. Republicans had a skillful leader in 1993, Newt Gingrich. He wasn't the biggest factor in their comeback, however. A failed Democratic president was.

Obama hasn't failed. He's been in office less than two months. But he is sowing the seeds of failure, both economically and politically. He doesn't quite own the economy yet, but he does own the stock market. It's a bet on the future. And so far the stock market has registered a resounding vote of no confidence in Obama's economic policies. Nor has Obama helped matters with his seeming indifference to the uninterrupted decline in equities since his inauguration.

What doesn't the market like? The pork-filled stimulus package was anything but reassuring. The failure of the Obama administration to produce a credible bank rescue plan is downright alarming. On top of those stumbles, the Obama budget for the next 10 years has spooked the stock market all the more. It calls for a huge burst of domestic spending paid for by higher taxes on the well-to-do and business. That's a recipe for a transfer of wealth, not for an economic recovery or surge in stock prices.

The budget scared prominent Obamaphiles like David Brooks of the *New York Times* and Jim Cramer, the boisterous financial broadcaster. Brooks wrote that Obama "is not who we thought he was." Cramer said Obama is causing "the greatest wealth destruction I've seen by a president." Criticized for his comment by White House press secretary Robert Gibbs, Cramer responded: "If that makes me an enemy of the White House, then call me a general of an army that Obama may not even know exists—tens of millions of people who live in fear of having no money saved when they need it and get poorer by the day." Moderate Democrats and Republicans were also shaken and said so publicly. The business community, which has tried to appease Obama, is growing fearful.

Here's the point: These are the

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people who drive centrist opinion. And the key to building a center-right coalition is drawing them away from Obama. The right is already in full anti-Obama mode. But attracting centrists and independents is something Republicans can't pull off on their own. Now they are getting help.

Congressional Republicans are actually doing a better job than they've gotten credit for in making themselves acceptable to centrists. The refrain of House Republican leader John Boehner is that Republicans must have "better solutions" to "win the issues." Their alternatives to Obama's economic policies have gotten little media attention, but they do exist and most are sensible. That's sufficient for the time being.

Democratic anxiety over the possibility of losing centrists—what there is of it—was reflected in the White House campaign to identify talk show superstar Rush Limbaugh as the leader of the Republican party. He's not. Parties in the minority seldom have leaders except in parliamentary systems. But Limbaugh, though he may not appeal to centrists, is important. He and his followers are an indispensable part of an effective center-right coalition—a simple fact of political life that appears to have been lost on Republican snobs who would ostracize Limbaugh.

Former Obamaphiles like David Brooks of the 'New York Times' and Jim Cramer, the boisterous financial broadcaster, are the kind of people who drive centrist opinion. And the key to building a center-right coalition is drawing them away from Obama.

A majority coalition of centrists and conservatives is a long shot for the near future. In Clinton's case, it didn't spring into being until his second year in office. But in Obama's case, the same elements are already present. Pollster David Winston found in a survey last fall that the electorate's ideology hadn't changed. Most voters, including independents, remain right of center. This was ratified by the exit poll on Election Day. Only 22 percent identified themselves as liberal, while 34 percent were conservatives and 44 percent moderates.

Clinton didn't notice that a coalition had congealed in opposition to his policies until Republicans captured Congress in the 1994 landslide. He survived by shifting to the right and compromising with Republicans. Obama, for all his talk about bipartisanship, isn't ready to do that, and he may never have to. Then again, the possibility he'll need to accommodate a center-right alliance is growing. ♦

MICHAEL RAMIREZ

ADDING INSULT TO INJURY.

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Down with Facebook!

What nobody bothers to mention about the social-networking site is that it's really dull—mind-numbingly dull.

By Matt Labash

Look at the outer shell—the parachute pants, the piano-key tie, the fake tuxedo T-shirt—and you might mistake me for a slave to fashion. Do not be deceived. Early adoption isn't my thing. I much prefer late adoption, that moment when the trend-worshipping sheeple who have early-adopted drive the unsustainable way of life I so stubbornly cling to ever so close to the edge of obsolescence, that I've no choice but to follow. This explains why I bought cassette tapes until 1999, why I wouldn't purchase a DVD player until Blockbuster cashiered their VHS stock. Toothpaste? I use it now that it's clear it's here to stay.

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So I'm not inflexible. But there is one promise I've made to myself. And that is that no matter how long I live, no matter how much pressure is exerted, no matter how socially isolated I become, I will never, ever join Facebook, the omnipresent online social-networking site that like so many things that have menaced our country (the Unabomber, *Love Story*, David Gergen) came to us from Harvard but has now worked its insidious hooks into every crevice of society.

For the five or six Amish shut-ins who may not yet have heard of this scourge (your tenacious ignorance is to be admired, and I'd immediately friend you if I was into Facebook and you had electricity), Facebook is an online community where colleagues, friends, long-lost acquaintances, friends of friends or long-lost acquaintances, and perfect strangers find and "friend" each other based on their real or perceived affinity. They then have access to each other's web

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pages, and consequently to each other's lives, quirks, photos, jottings, oversharings, and mental disorders, as well as to those of the ever-expanding universe of their friends' circles, thus increasing the likelihood that you will either embarrass yourself or be embarrassed by someone whose life would never otherwise intersect with yours. (Right about now, a Facetard is ginning up an angry letter to the editor saying this would not be the case if you know how to control your privacy settings. Save the geek speech for your Facebook friends, Facetard, I already got my eight hours sleep.)

Why the resistance? There are many factors. But mainly, it's Farhad Manjoo. He's the technology columnist at *Slate*, an online magazine that I regularly read and a place where I have several real friends, as opposed to the fake friends you collect on Facebook. I've not met Manjoo, who strikes me as a perfectly pleasant fellow even if his ilk is destroying America. A few weeks back, I received an email from a California lawyer friend of mine. A proud skeptic and non-joiner by temperament, he had downed a shot of Kool-Aid and was now asking me to clasp hands and join him in his journey to the new fantasy land of Facebook. Attached to his invitation, intended to shame me out of nonparticipation ("Resistance is futile, join the Borg," he wrote), was a link to a piece Manjoo had just written, tauntingly entitled "You Have No Friends—Everyone else is on Facebook. Why aren't you?"

Manjoo cited all the statistics: Facebook had just added its 150-millionth member and since last August is signing up 374,000 people *each day*. It has achieved absolute critical mass, thus compounding its utility and effectiveness. Not joining now is an affectation in itself, like refusing to own a cellphone or rejecting the social lubricant of antiperspirant. "Facebook is now at the same point," he wrote. "Whether or not you intend it, you're saying something by staying away."

How right you are, Mr. Manjoo. I am indeed saying something, and it is this: I hate Facebook and everyone on it, including my friends, who I like. My wife just joined it, and I dearly love her. But scratch that. I hate her too. After all, right is right. Sometimes, we courageous few must make a stand.

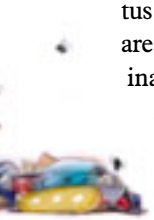
One by one, my non-joiner friends have succumbed. As one reluctantly joined the world of "poking" and getting "poked" by people he already talked to, people he had no interest in talking to, or people he didn't know at all—all conducted under the suspect rubric of "friendship" so that they can look at each other's photos and write dreary "status updates" on their "walls" (brief squibs about what you are doing at that exact moment, usually with emoticons and inappropriate quotation marks: "Matt Labash is wondering how long to marinate human flesh to get out that 'gamey taste' ☺")—he was almost apologetic about it. Within two days of his birth on Facebook, he said, "I have 198 friends. I have never heard of most of them. This is so dorky, I hate myself for doing it."

Being a true friend, I didn't allay his guilt. I told him he was a very sad man, that collecting Facebook friends is the equivalent of being a catlady, collecting numerous Himalayans, which you have neither the time nor the inclination to feed. "You have obviously never been on Facebook," he said. "It's so much worse than collecting cats." By this week, however, he'd lost all ironic distance. When I told him that he now took it all way too seriously, that I liked the old, conflicted him better, and that he should take a hard look at himself, he sloughed me off. He was now just another friend-whore: "I don't need to look at myself. I have 614 Facebook friends to do the looking for me."

Another longtime friend, the host of Fox's *Red Eye*, Greg Gutfeld, tells me he has 3,200 Facebook friends: "I know maybe 50 of them." To Gutfeld's credit, he is ashamed. He concedes that Facebook is a place that turns adults into teenage girls. "Instead of making things," he says, "We're telling people how great *Gossip Girl* is. Would your grandfather go on Facebook? Probably not. I think we've become a country thirsting for attention—Facebook is basically Googling yourself for people who don't have enough hits to warrant it." Being a television personality, Gutfeld will go on for the occasional ego-stroke, but admits, "It's all pointless. A Facebook friend won't shave your back."

The hardest to watch fall, however, has been my wife. I'll call her "Alana," since that's her name (but note to Facetards: Don't try to friend her to heckle me, she will not receive you). A few months back, she became a hardcore Facebook addict, as our late 30s age group has become the fastest-growing Facebook segment (35-54 year-olds have increased 276.4 percent to nearly 7 million users in just the last six months). There are worse things she could become, I suppose: a Meth dealer, a UPS delivery-man groupie, a Twitterer. Still, it's unsettling.

In our house, there have always been clearly defined roles. I procrastinate, shirk responsibilities, and spend much time peppering a fairly wide circle of friends with an incessant barrage of individually tailored emails, many of them lengthy (as opposed to the abbreviated, promiscuously generic, group-blog like messages left on Facebook). I tell myself it keeps me in game-shape, writing-wise, like a baseball player taking cuts in the batting cage. Alana isn't an Internet dawdler by nature, but rather, a doer, a model of graceful efficiency. She is Felix to my Oscar.



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But slowly, I noticed things taking a turn. The cosmetic stuff, like her immaculate appearance and hygiene, stayed the same. Nor did I see her do anything too creepy or severe, such as sending pictures of her feet at the request of a new Facebook friend or running out to some hot-sheets motel to get worked like a farm implement by an old high-school flame who'd renewed contact (which happens with some frequency on Facebook). But I did notice a general distractedness, a vacantness, a thousand-yard-stare. She seemed to notice it too. In the old days, she'd check her email maybe once or twice a day. Now, she was hitting her laptop like a rat hits a lever for pellets in a Skinner box.

"I hate myself," she'd say.

"Why?" I'd ask.

"Because I'm becoming you," she said.

A regular complaint around here is that I ignore her when consumed in email correspondence. But now, as I tried to relate a story to her from my day, she'd humor me, dutifully nodding as I'd only see the top of her head, since her nose was buried in her computer. She pretended to listen, but was really just acquiring more Facebook friends or picking a piece of "flair" to put on her message board as if she were a waitress at TGIF's or perhaps contemplating whether to hit someone with a "yellow snowball" (a Facebook application seemingly intended for six-year-olds, in which you can hit a friend with a snowball, leaving them with the knotty moral dilemma of whether to hit you back, though snow, of course, never actually changes hands). Or maybe she'd just be uploading pictures of herself, or worse, of me and the kids and Moses, our Bernese Mountain dog, a presumptuous act. Without our consent, she was incorporating us in her new career as a flasher. It was harmless enough for now: unauthorized photos of me fly fishing, or sitting on the porch with our sons. But with the creeping exhibitionism that takes over most Facebook users, it seemed only a matter of time before she started posting the nudes, some shots I took when I was trying to break into Washington journalism (I was young and needed the money).

The very fact that they are on Facebook has convinced people that every facet of their life is inherently interesting enough to alert everyone to its importance.

Normally a crisp woman who tackles tasks with speed and aplomb, she had a new slackness to her. All the things she usually takes care of without me even being much aware (paying bills, making dinner, etc.) would slide, as she was now filling out the endless Facebook busy-work questionnaires people constantly send to each other like dippy substitute teachers who don't know what assignment to give. As she filled out the now ubiquitous "25 Random Things About Me" list shooting around Facebook circles, near perfect strangers could come to know things it took me years to find out ("I hate when people talk without clearing their throats. . . . I tend to like those with an easy smile") and things I hadn't even yet discovered ("I wish I had more opportunities to shoot a gun").

I'd earned this knowledge by taking the time to get to know her. But now, she was slutting it out for free. And not just to old high school chums who seemed to migrate to Facebook en masse almost instantaneously. Alana accepted friendship from people she knew, people she barely knew, and people who said they knew her, but she couldn't pick out of a police lineup. With some of her new friends, it might come down to that.

One recent afternoon, my sister-in-law came over, carrying the local paper and informing Alana and me that a distant acquaintance from their childhood was on the front page for getting in a barfight, and holding a knife to a guy's neck, leaving a superficial wound. "That's a crazy coincidence," said Alana. "I have a friend request sitting from him in my inbox right now!" I read the story aloud, but Alana went straight to her inbox, looked up the knife-wielder in question, and hit accept. On his Facebook page, he bragged of owning the "friggin' cemetery on Ward Road," while his profile photo featured him holding a fork at an odd angle, not unlike an angle you'd hold a knife against a guy's neck.

"What are you doing?" I asked, incredulous.

"Oh c'mon," Alana said, shooing me off. "He's just a Facebook friend. It's not like we're having him over to the house for dinner."

Time magazine recently declared Facebook more popular than porn. But who are they kidding? Facebook is porn. With porn, you watch other people take off their clothes and abase themselves in public. On Facebook, where there's technically an anti-nudity policy (thus defeating the whole purpose of the Internet), you get to figuratively do the same.

By now, the horror stories are legion. It's a place where anorexics have been caught giving each other new ways to purge, where the Uruguayan interior minister posted

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pictures of herself in the shower, where a site was set up where young men could boast of hitting prostitutes with donuts and hot chocolate. It's a place where a Swedish nurse got in trouble for posting photos of the brain from a brain surgery she was assisting with, where marauding bands of teenage thugs intercepted birthday party logistics so they could crash a home, leaving it in ruins and the dog comatose, and where a husband ended up hacking his wife to death with a meat cleaver after noticing she'd changed her Facebook status to "single."

It's a place with so many superficial friend hoarders that one guy vowed to eat all 12 McDonald's value meals in one sitting (including the fries) if 100,000 people friended him. They did, and he gave it a go, but somewhere short of the Filet-O-Fish, he ended up violently hurling in the parking lot. It's a place where friendship is so devoid of honor or value that it can be shown up by a cynical burger joint advertising stunt. Burger King, in their "Whopper Sacrifice" campaign, started a Facebook application which would reward you with a free hamburger when you sacrificed ten Facebook friends. Burger King would then send alerts to the jettisoned ones, effectively notifying the newly defriended that they were only worth a tenth of a flame-broiled Whopper. Facebook ended up disabling the application, but not before 233,906 friends were sacrificed.

As if all of this isn't embarrassing enough for Facebook devotees, the most cloying writer in the world, *West Wing* creator Aaron Sorkin, signed on, promising/threatening to write a Facebook movie.

But it isn't for all the aforementioned reasons you should join me in hating Facebook. Far from it. For after going onto my wife's account to know what I'm not missing, I'd have been happy to run into some meat-cleaving husbands, showering Uruguayan ministers, or even Aaron Sorkin (actually, I'd take the McDonald's hurler over Sorkin). That, at least, would've been interesting.

No, the reason to hate Facebook is because of the stultifying mind-numbing inanity of it all, the sheer boredom. If Facebook helps put together streakers with voyeurs, the streakers, for the most part, after shedding their trench coats, seem to be running around not with taut and tanned hardbodies, but in stained granny panties with dark socks. They have a reality-show star's unquenchable thirst for broadcasting all the details of their lives, no matter how unexceptional those details are. They do so in the steady, Chinese-water-torture drip of status updates. The very fact that they are on the air (or rather, on Facebook) has convinced them that every facet of their life must be inherently interesting enough to alert everyone to its importance.

These are all actual status updates (with name changes): "*Maria is eating Girl Scout cookies. . . . Tom is glad it's the weekend. . . . Jacinda is longing for some sleep, pillow come to momma! . . . Dan is going to get something to eat. . . . Anne is taking Tyler to daycare. . . . Amber loves to dip. I can dip almost any food in blue cheese, ranch dressing, honey mustard, sour cream, mayonnaise, ketchup. Well, I think you get the point.*" Yes. Uncle. Please make it stop. For the love of God, we get the point.

Then, of course, there is the crushing anticlimax of people re-entering your life who might've fallen away into your past, because in each other's past is where you mutually belong. Perhaps you haven't seen them in 20 years. Perhaps she was the cheerleader whose shapely legs fired your imagination in geometry class, whose smile could heat the gymnasium, whose jojoba-enriched hair you smelled when you broke into her locker and pulled some strands from her brush, dropping it in a Ziplock baggie, taking it home to fashion an effigy for your hair-doll shrine.

Now you're left on Facebook, desperately trying to recapture the magic by paging through photos of her freckly kids at Busch Gardens, stalking her like some kind of weirdo. She's 15 pounds heavier now. But that's okay, next to her husband, a red-faced orb who used to be a hale three-sport athlete, whose only physical exertion now appears to be curling gin-and-tonics and power carb-loading. But her words are still a caress, as even pixels carry the melodious lilt of a voice that perfumes the air like April birdsong, when she status-updates you and 738 of her closest friends, with: "Madison ate bad clams last night. Boy, does her tummy hurt!!! ☹"

Last week, my wife logged onto Facebook, took it in for about three minutes, shook her head, snapped her laptop shut, and sighed.

"What's wrong?" I asked.

"I don't know, it's not the same," Alana said. "I was into it at first. But then I realized, there's no longer any wonder, any intrigue. Everything's out there, on display. For years, you wondered, 'Whatever happened to so-and-so?' And now you know. All questions get answered. There's no more mystery."

She reminded me of a line from F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Crack-Up": "It is sadder to find the past again and find it inadequate to the present than it is to have it elude you and remain forever a harmonious conception of memory."

Alana put on a winter coat, leashed up Moses, and walked out into the February cold, returning to the land of the living. I was glad to have her back. Maybe I could even learn to love her again, after her torrid Facebook affair. I could stop worrying about her now, and get back to more important things, like my personal email, where I could service my own circle in earnest, devoid of faux interlopers. Where I could experience human complexity: rivalry, and thinly veiled insults, and petty jealousies and imagined slights. Who needs Facebook friends? That's what real friends are for. ♦

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Victimology 101 at Yale

While the rest of the university tightens its belt, guess who's exempted from the austerity campaign?

By Heather Mac Donald

In December 2008, Yale University president Richard Levin announced a series of budget cuts to compensate for a 25 percent drop in the value of Yale's endowment. This February, the university launched the Office of LGBTQ [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer] Resources to provide support for Yale's homosexual community. According to its director, the new office is intended to make the "University feel like a friendly place as opposed to an alien, hostile place" to gays. The recession, it appears, is going to have little impact on the academic culture of victimology and the ever-growing bureaucracy that supports it.

The idea that Yale is an "alien, hostile place" to gays is one of those absurd conceits that could only be maintained in the alternative universe of academia. Yale students and faculty are undoubtedly the most tolerant, least homophobic people on earth; Yale helped launch the field of gay studies three decades ago and has only increased its involvement since. A partial list of milestones in Yale's support for the self-conscious cultivation of gay identity would include:

• 1986, establishment of the Lesbian and Gay Studies Center; sentencing of a student to two years of academic probation for making fun of Yale's Gay and Lesbian Awareness Day (the sentence was withdrawn after First Amendment second thoughts);

• 1990s, start-up of the Pink Book, an official reference guide to courses geared towards lesbian and gay concerns;

• 1998, authorization of an undergraduate concentration in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies;

• 2001, roll-out of the Larry Kramer Initiative for Lesbian and Gay Studies, further increasing the lectures, conferences, and visiting professorships in LGBTS;

• 2006, inclusion of "gender identity or expression" in Yale's nondiscrimination policy (which, of course, already protected sexual orientation) after students campaign for the change; hiring of a "special assistant to the deans for LGBTQ issues" (what the addition of the "Q" signifies was left unexplained); start-up of an oral history project on Yale's record on LGBTQ issues, featuring student interviews of gay Yale alumni; and

• 2009, inauguration of the Office of LGBTQ Relations.

The idea that Yale is an 'alien, hostile place' to gays is one of those absurd conceits that could only be maintained in the alternative universe of academia.

At present, Yale's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies committee sponsors research and course offerings designed to foster "critical analysis of queer and normative sexualities, the formation of sexual and gender minorities, and the role of sexuality in culture and politics across the world." The Pink Book currently recommends 22 courses, including History of Sexuality, which canvasses the "construction of heterosexuality and homosexuality, the role of scientific studies in moral discourse, and the rise of sexology as a scientific discipline" (enrollment limited to freshmen); Cross-Cultural Narratives of Desire (another freshmen-only course); Gender Transgression, which studies the "issues that arise when a person does not have a 'readable' gender identity; what it means to break gender rules; ways in which gender defines sexual categories such as heterosexual, gay, lesbian, and bisexual; [and] the role of race in gender transgression"; and Music and Queer Identities.

The LGBT Co-op, a university-subsidized student group that "work[s] to provide safe spaces" for LGBT students, organizes the usual pride weeks, complete with S&M

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lectures and talks by "well-known" transvestites. In 2001, Yale's Pride Week sent out flyers to local high schools and featured a High School GSA [Gay-Straight Alliance] Coffee.

In light of this history, one might think it impossible to maintain that Yale needs a new LGBTQ office in order to "feel like a friendly place as opposed to an alien, hostile place" to gays. Especially since the director of that new office, Maria Trumpler, has already been serving as "special assistant to the deans for LGBTQ issues." But Trumpler herself charges that Yale has heretofore failed to confer on gays the power to form a community, reported the *Yale Daily News*.

If you're tempted to ask why students require administration backing in order to form a "community," you don't understand the codependent relationship between self-engrossed students and the adults whose career consists of catering to that self-involvement. Students in today's university regularly act out little psychodramas of oppression before an appreciative audience of deans and provosts. The essence of those psychodramas is to force the university to recognize a student's narrowly defined "identity" through ever more elaborate bureaucratic mechanisms. Rather than laugh the student players off the stage, the deans, provosts, and sundry other administrators willingly participate in their drama, intently negotiating with them and conferring additional benefits wherever possible.

In 2007, at the behest of feminist students, Yale added yet another layer of costly bureaucracy—the Sexual Harassment and Assault Resources and Education Center—to its already generous sexual assault infrastructure. I asked physics professor Peter Parker, convenor of the college's Sexual Harassment Grievance Board and a sponsor of the new S.H.A.R.E. Center, how many sexual assaults on students there were at Yale. He said that he had "no idea." (In fact, the number of reported unconfirmed assaults can usually be counted on one hand.) So if students came to the administration demanding a malaria treatment center, would Yale build it without first determining the prevalence of malaria on campus? I asked him. "We didn't make our judgment based on numbers, but based on concern by students in the community," he answered.

Faced with such a pliant oppressor, students have to get quite creative in manufacturing new causes of grievance. At the opening ceremonies for the new Office of LGBTQ Resources, junior Rachel Schiff, a coordinator for the LGBT Co-op, complained: "The fact that we don't actually have a physical space says lots about Yale's stance towards LGBT life on the ground at a metaphorical level." Actually, whatever the metaphorical meaning of the lack of office space, the literal meaning is quite simple: Yale was in a hurry to roll out the new office, and it faces a shortage of empty buildings. Finding an independent home for LGBTQ Resources is one of director Trumpler's first priorities. Does Rachel Schiff's clearly delusional idea that "Yale's stance towards LGBT life on the ground" has been anything other than accommodating set off any warning signals among administrators that its students are losing contact with reality? Apparently not; such preposterous charges of administration indifference to this or that favored identity group are greeted at every American college with meek silence.

Of course, other students can be counted on to respond less than respectfully to the constant assertion of victim status; the resulting friction happily fuels the further expansion of the student services bureaucracy. In 2008, a Yale fraternity photographed its members holding a tiny sign "We Love Yale Sluts" in front of the Yale Women's Center (dedicated to providing a "safe space" for Yale women). The fraternity posted the photo online. The Women's Center denizens and university bureaucrats predictably took the bait. Yale promised to refurbish the Women's Center, created a permanent Intercultural Affairs Council, and established two committees to study the incident. Those committees recommended chartering a standing committee to implement changes in Yale's sexual harassment policy. The fraternity members were charged with intimidation and harassment, but eventually were cleared.

Yale's response to the photo incident seems nothing if not scrupulously attentive. To Trumpler, however, it was rather lackluster. Today's even more bulked-up bureaucracy would immediately generate "discussions around issues of gender and sexuality," she told the *Yale Daily News*.

Many students come to college asking the question: Who am I? At its best, a liberal arts education responds to that question by pushing students outside of their limited selves and into the vast reaches of human imagination and experience. It assumes that students can enter lives radically different from their own—that a Chinese-American girl, say, can find meaning in Odysseus' quest to return home—and that they can start to participate in a centuries-long conversation that contains sorrows and fears that most 18-year-olds can barely imagine. No freshman can understand the battle between Lear and his daughters, but 40 years later, it might return to him with a deep pang of recognition. Thomas Hobbes's warning regarding the ever-present threat of anarchy will likely remain wholly abstract for secure American students until they have seen more of the world. When they have, however, his articulation of the fragility of social order may echo in their minds as terrifyingly true.

Today's solipsistic university, however, allows students to answer the "Who am I?" question exclusively, rather than inclusively. Identity politics defines the self by its difference

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from as many other people as possible, so as to increase the underdog status of one's chosen identity group. (Women have commandeered an underdog identity even though they are the majority on campuses; that no one objects is a measure of their clout.) And because the robust growth of the student services bureaucracy depends on the proliferation of identity groups, administrations busy themselves with identity-based constituencies that might not even exist.

Yale's Committee on Gender-Neutral Housing, composed of the dean of student affairs, the Council of Masters chair, the associate dean for physical resources and planning, and the special assistant to the deans for LGBTQ affairs, has been meeting since the fall of 2007 to decide whether Yale should allow juniors and seniors to live with roommates of the opposite sex, an accommodation demanded in the name of transgender students. (Yale, along with Princeton, is the only Ivy not to have authorized so-called gender-neutral housing.) There is no suggestion in any of the news coverage that Yale has tried to determine how many transgender students are actually enrolled at Yale.

Indeed, Trumpler opposes requiring students to identify themselves as transgender in order to qualify for mixed-gender housing. This don't-ask-don't-tell policy is doubly convenient—it preserves the mystery around whether the "T" in LGBTQ actually has any local referent, and it allows heterosexual students to shack up. But only someone ensnared by heteronormativity would suppose that this latter group would seek mixed-gender housing for carnal purposes. Junior Emma Sloan told the *Yale Daily News* that the idea that men and women are necessarily attracted to the opposite sex is "antiquated."

It matters not whether a college is private or public, large or small; all are encrusted with layers of bureaucrats catering to students' most narcissistic tendencies.

While the drive to define oneself oppositionally is good for student services administrators, it is not so good for education. Can a student who is furiously itemizing the many ways she has been dissed as a female of color or a lesbian, say, lose herself in the opalescent language of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or hear the aching melancholy in Wordsworth's "Intimations" ode? She will have been taught to scour books for slights to, or affirmations of, her own self, but neither the play nor the poem is directly about her carefully cultivated identity.

Yale's sprawling student services bureaucracy is drearily typical. It matters not whether a college is private or public, large or small; all are encrusted with layers of expendable adults catering to students' most narcissistic tendencies. The growth in this bureaucracy helps explain exploding annual tuition costs, which at elite private colleges now run over half the median family income.

In the years ahead, expect to see a new constituency pushing for the expansion of identity-based services and courses: graduates of the solipsistic university. Older alumni might have provided a brake on the trivialization of their alma maters; instead they blindly shoveled hundreds of millions of dollars into colleges about whose radical transformation they preserved a carefully cultivated ignorance. Now those older alumni are being replaced by younger generations who take for granted that universities should cultivate students' narrowly defined identities. Yale, for example, administers two alumni funds to support undergraduates pursuing LGBT studies; their respective donors come from the classes of '83 and '85. Other identity fiefdoms in colleges across the country have their own recent alumni patrons.

Yale's new Office of LGBTQ Resources is initially funded at $20,000 a year, obviously a minute fraction of the college's $100 million deficit for 2009-10. But the costs of the office exceed its immediate budget. By perpetuating the premise that Yale not only should officially recognize students' balkanized identities but has still not satisfactorily done so, LGBTQ Resources guarantees ongoing student demands and continues distorting the idea of a liberal arts education. Yale could take that $20,000 and purchase every low-income student a complete Shakespeare, the Federalist Papers, and all the plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. It could fund a Ph.D. candidate to conduct an evening reading group on the Enlightenment philosophers. Surely such endeavors would contribute more to the expansion of students' minds than making another offering to their self-regard.

In his December 2008 letter on Yale's budget problems, President Richard Levin affirmed the university's mission of "educating the most talented and promising students for leadership and service." Teaching students to identify phantom insults to their egos doesn't train them for leadership and service but merely for future whining. The economic crisis is the perfect opportunity for every college to say to its students: "We recognize you as young people forged from a common humanity. We hope to cultivate in you humility regarding the limits of your knowledge, a passion to overcome those limits, and a deep gratitude for the landmarks of human thought that it will be your privilege to study for the next four years. We are dismantling the college's multicultural, identity-based services because you don't need them. Find yourselves by engaging with beauty, intellectual complexity, and each other." ♦

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'The Start of the Hunt,' ca. 1900, by George Derville Rowlandson

FINE ART PHOTOGRAPHIC

Chased by Modernity

The Hunt confronts the 21st century

BY ROGER SCRUTON

Controversies over hunting are not new. The legend of Actaeon and Diana testifies to the sense of sacrilege aroused when the chase leads people into places where no mortal footstep should fall. Plato devotes a section of *The Laws* to defending hunting with hounds against those who saw it as a threat to sacred places. And from time immemorial there have been rules and conventions determining who can and who cannot hunt.

In ancient Persia, as in medieval Europe, hunting was a privilege of the king and his immediate entourage, protected by laws imposing severe penalties on those found guilty of poaching. In France hunting with hounds remained a sport of the aristocracy right through to the 18th century, since it involved ownership of the land and the habit of galloping across it. Resentment at this was sufficiently strong that the right to hunt in the royal forests was the first right granted to the new body of citizens at the French Revolution—a symbol of their release from class oppression.

Killing Tradition
Inside Hunting and Animal Rights Controversies
by Simon J. Bronner
Kentucky, 320 pp., $40

In England the resentment was softened by a long tradition of social mobility. The expansion of the class of yeoman farmers meant that the middle classes were included in the hunt, with the small-holders and farm laborers eventually joining also. This inclusiveness was not an expression of egalitarian principles. It arose from the need to ensure the cooperation of those whose land and crops were threatened by the stampeding horde.

Whatever the cause, however, by the time of Robert Surtees's celebrated novels of fox-hunting life in the mid-19th century, hunting with hounds had become, in England, a social melting point in which incomers from the towns—lawyers, tradesmen, civil servants—rode side-by-side with farmers, squires, and lords, in pursuit of "an Englishman's peculiar privilege," as a contemporary writer put it.

Surtees's master of foxhounds, John Jorrocks, is a Cockney grocer, who sells tea to the squirearchy as he charges beside them over hedge and ditch. Trollope, perhaps the greatest recorder of the fox hunt, took up the sport when working for the Post Office, while two

Roger Scruton is the author of the forthcoming Beauty *(Oxford).*

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other delightful chroniclers—Somerville and Ross—were women, for whom hunting was not just a recreation, but an integral part of daily life in the countryside.

So it is in rural England today. But resentment has reared its ugly head nevertheless. The sight of whole communities prepared to dress up and scramble across the neighborhood in the wake of foxhounds, some on horseback, others on foot or bicycle, some in automobiles or ATVs, is so offensive to urban socialists—for whom the countryside should be a scene of "class struggle" and certainly not one of cheerful solidarity around a shared and sociable sport—that it is hardly surprising that the Labour party has made the banning of fox hunting its main legislative priority.

Indeed, for the last ten years, the party has had no other consistent policy, devoting (according to *Killing Tradition*) 700 hours of parliamentary time to debating the matter—compared with 18 hours allotted to the question whether to go to war in Iraq, and no hours at all to the question whether to ratify the Lisbon Treaty, which relinquishes vast areas of national sovereignty to the unelected bureaucrats of the European Union.

There are two reasons why it is difficult for Americans to understand this particular debate. First, "hunting" does not, in America, mean the noble sport of hunting with hounds but the activity known in Britain as "shooting," and is widely frowned upon, especially when the quarry is an animal such as a fox or a deer that could be properly hunted in the traditional way. Second, for that very reason, hunting has not had, in America, quite the connotations of class privilege and land ownership that it has for urban people in Britain, and has not been seen as a standing offense against the ordinary citizen and his rights—including his right to forbid pleasures enjoyed by the wrong sort of person.

As everybody knows, this right to forbid has finally been recognized by the British Parliament, and hunting with hounds is now practiced—officially at least—only as a form of "trail hunting," in which hounds follow a scent but in which the intention is neither to kill nor to pursue a quarry but to provide sport for the followers. Of course, it is not always possible to prevent hounds from following a real scent, with a live creature at the end of it. But so far, at least, members of the parliamentary Labour party, prey to a residual doubt as to whether a dog could be a fully incorporated member of the English upper class, have not sought to forbid this.

Winston Churchill shooting pheasants in Yorkshire, 1910

GETTY IMAGES

On the other hand, the philosophy of animal rights—to which the Labour party subscribes, having been persuaded by the powerful arguments, which included a million-pound donation advanced by the Political Animal Lobby—ought to imply that animals have duties, too. Maybe this controversy will not be finally brought to an end, therefore, until dog jails and horse jails have sprung up across the English countryside, with foxes granted the right to bring actions for damages against those who have disturbed their tranquility.

Simon Bronner is a professor of American Studies and Folklore, and looks at the growing conflict between hunters and the defenders of animal rights in terms of the folk culture of hunting. His book is not a lively read, being a survey of controversies which, whatever their social and political importance, are largely devoid of intellectual interest. He is more interested in the sexual symbolism of hunting than in its deep social origins. And his argument is flawed by his failure to notice that hunting with hounds is an *entirely different* activity from shooting.

Of course, the same kind of person objects to both sports: But that kind of person also objects to fishing, horse racing, meat eating, and zoos. This should not lead us to overlook what is (from the anthropological point of view) the fundamental difference, which is that, while shooting is about killing animals, hunting with hounds is about joining them. It has far more in common with the American rodeo than with the thing that Americans call "hunting." Indeed, like the rodeo, it belongs to the ancient forms of totemic religion that were implanted in us by our hunter-gatherer ordeals, and which express a love of animals far deeper than anything revealed in the sugar-coated tear drops of PETA.

Bronner takes time off from the American controversies—for instance, over the Labor Day pigeon shoot in Hegins, Pennsylvania—to consider the U.K. Hunting Act of 2004. But he focuses on the marginal sport of hare-coursing, and touches only glancingly on the two most important targets of that malicious legislation: deer hunting and fox hunting, both of which involve the arduous pursuit of quarry

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in ways that pose as great a risk to the pursuer as to the pursued. And although, as his title rightly implies, the controversy is as much about tradition as about killing, I do not think that Bronner gets to the heart of it.

The conflict between hunter and settler is ancient, and underlies the first murder: Cain's offering of fruit having failed to please the Lord, while the savory odor of Abel's quarry, duly offered on the altar, had been accepted with relish. This story says something important about the deeply interred guilt of the human species. At some point humanity shifted from the hunter-gatherer life, in which man is one species among many, competing for territory, confronting danger, and acting always as a tribe or a group in the search for nourishment, to the life of settlement, in which man takes charge of the earth and its fruits.

This shift involved a defiance of the created order as great, in its way, as that original theft of fruit from the tree of knowledge. By settling and farming, man begins to turn nature in his own direction, to elevate self and family over tribe and comrades, to drive competing species from their habitats, and to remake the landscape in his own image. In short, he sets out on that long journey towards the suburbs, the disastrous ecological consequences of which are only now fully apparent.

Looking back on it, the Lord was surely right to favor Abel's offering. And Cain's crime is one that we all need to atone for. That is how I see hunting with hounds: as atonement for our settled ways, and as a collective activity which briefly returns us to the hunter-gatherer condition, so as to enjoy tribal and communal relations with our fellow humans, and species-ties with horse, hound, and quarry. This activity sets us aright with the animal kingdom, and enables us to rejoice in life and death as gifts that we share with other species.

Seeing it in that way—and what is the point of being a professor of folklore if you don't take the long-term anthropological perspective?—Bronner ought to have recognized the potentially tragic nature of what is now happening, in both Europe and America. We are witnessing the final conflict between the suburbs and the countryside. Organizations like PETA are composed largely of people for whom animals are pets, things to be caressed and fawned over, creatures deprived of any independent reality and maintained in hothouse conditions as proof of their owners' cost-free moral virtues.

Mr. Jorrocks in 'The Handley Cross' by R.S. Surtees

In Britain the RSPCA, one of the principal agitators behind the Hunting Act, raises vast amounts of money from cat owners and emphasizes kindness to cats in all its propaganda. That these vile killers are responsible in Britain for 180 million cruel deaths annually, that they have cleared the landscape of songbirds and many protected species, that they are now breeding in the wild in ways that threaten the ecological balance—all such facts are irrelevant in the eyes of the activists.

The purpose of cats is to fawn on the people who fawn on them; they are an immovable part of suburban sentimentality, and anything similarly endowed with bright eyes, four legs, and fur will be the beneficiary of the same corrupt emotions that are lavished on them. Foxes and hares, deer and badgers—all gain instant support from people who know only their appearance, and never have to confront their reality.

In the days before the automobile it was possible for rural people to avoid the censors, to re-create some version of the natural relation between man and animal, to devote themselves to preserving the habitats and meeting the needs of quarry species, and to reap their reward on their festive days of hunting. The countryside is now patroled by suburban vigilantes, who are outraged by activities that have "no place in a civilized society," as we were told by our Labour party nannies in 2004.

Fortunately, the American countryside is vast, and the price of gas is sure to increase. However, even if this protects the more isolated and small-scale forms of hunting, it does not protect the great social events, such as the Hegins pigeon shoot. As we have seen in Britain, it is not merely the sight of people killing animals that disturbs the vigilantes. They are animated also by puritanism, which H.L. Mencken accurately defined as "the haunting fear that someone, somewhere, might be happy."

Far more troubling than the sight of pigeons fluttering to the ground in their death throes is the spectacle of people enjoying themselves by shooting them. That was the kind of sentiment that led to the U.K. Hunting Act. And it will lead to similar legislation here, if Americans do not wake up now to what is at stake: not just the rights and freedoms of rural residents, but the very identity of the countryside, as a place where people live in equilibrium with other species, and relinquish the desire to tame them. ♦

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Lincoln Incarnate

If our 16th president were alive today, chances are he wouldn't be Barack Obama. **BY ANDREW FERGUSON**

Mario Cuomo has written one book (*Why Lincoln Matters*) and edited another (*Lincoln on Democracy*) dedicated to the proposition that Abraham Lincoln is a lot like Mario Cuomo. But he recently revised his view. Lincoln is actually a lot like Barack Obama. Cuomo listed the similarities in an op-ed that appeared in *Newsday* on Inauguration Day.

"Obama, like Lincoln, rejects rigid ideology in policymaking," Cuomo wrote. Both presidents declared their preference for "common sense" and "pragmatism," in stark contrast to those presidents who have declared their opposition to common sense and pragmatism. Accordingly, Cuomo went on, "Obama . . . like Lincoln, will not hesitate to call for substantial governmental assistance in the effort to right the Ship of State."

"Obama, like Lincoln, has superb personal gifts." These include a keen mind, poise under pressure, a prose style that sings, and a gift for delivering tub-thumpers. Both Obama and Lincoln lacked significant executive experience, Cuomo pointed out; both were political underdogs; and both were raised in "modest circumstances"—Lincoln on subsistence farms that were largely unchanged since the Iron Age, and Obama at a prep school in Honolulu, followed by Columbia University and Harvard Law School.

Andrew Ferguson, a senior editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD, *is the author of* Land of Lincoln: Adventures in Abe's America.

And then there's the shared mistrust of military force. "Lincoln knew, as Obama surely does, that we cannot end terror here [or] in the Middle East . . . just by having the world's most powerful weapons and the best fighting force." To sum up, Cuomo said, "Obama . . . shares Lincoln's extraordinary vision."

A. Lincoln
A Biography
by Ronald C. White
Random House, 816 pp., $35

And yet, Cuomo added, and yet: There's a difference between these two pacific, statist, pragmatic presidents—these underdogs under the skin. Obama, taking office, has a tougher job than Lincoln ever did. Obama faces environmental disaster, genocide, worldwide hunger, and a "serious recession." Lincoln, Cuomo wrote, had only "one issue" to resolve. That would be the Civil War.

The declared similarities among Lincoln, Cuomo, and Obama will strike some of us as implausible. But Cuomo's view of Lincoln is already popular and gaining ground, here at the bicentennial of his birth. George McGovern, to cite another antique Democrat, wrote on Lincoln's birthday that Lincoln was a forerunner of Obama-like "change" and the perfect antidote to neoconservatism. Opinion-slingers from Election Day onward made the same point—including the president himself, who after his election evoked Lincoln so often that he began to seem like a boy bouncing on tiptoe, shoulders thrown back, measuring his height against Dad's.

And so what? Americans are always trying to remake their greatest president in their own image. From the bottomless hamper of historical evidence we pick the scraps that can be stitched together to make the Lincoln of our dreams. Christians find Lincoln the prayerful mystic, military men see Lincoln the brilliant strategist of war, politicians buck themselves up with Lincoln the wily and beneficent leader, and even gay activists see, if not Lincoln the gay activist, then at least a Lincoln who was actively gay. So why not a Lincoln dolled up as a liberal Democrat circa 2009?

As if on cue, Ronald C. White appears with his new biography. A former professor at the San Francisco Theological Seminary, he has made an 800-page attempt to do what Cuomo did in an 800-word op-ed. It arrives amid an unstoppable and apparently endless torrent of Lincoln books roaring out of the warehouses, so blinding it becomes hard to tell them apart: "Which would be best for Father's Day—*November 1862: Lincoln's Month of Change* or *July 1863: Lincoln and the Month that Changed America* or maybe *The First Half of the Second Week of May 1864: The Bloody Four or Five Days that Changed Lincoln*?"

A. Lincoln: A Biography stands apart from all these, however. It has the potential to fix the Cuomoized Lincoln in the popular imagination for a long time to come.

This is mostly a matter of good timing. Every 15 or 20 years, a new cradle-to-grave, one-volume Lincoln biography like White's comes along, claiming to be the "standard life," as the booksellers used to say. If the public likes it, it takes its place in an ancient line of succession. One standard life displaces an earlier standard life, and then in time it is itself displaced by a still newer standard life. *Lincoln the Unknown* by Dale Carnegie held the position from the 1930s to the early 1950s, when Benjamin Thomas dethroned it with *Abraham Lincoln: A Biography* (still the best life of Lincoln in print). Thomas was bumped in the mid-seventies by Stephen B. Oates and his *With Malice Toward None*, which was pushed aside by David Herbert Donald's *Lincoln* in 1995. At age 14, Donald's book has grown whiskers—gotten stale, I should probably say—so White's book arrives at just the right moment. *USA Today* has already declared it the go-to bio.

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"If you read one book about Lincoln," said the reviewer, "make it *A. Lincoln*."

What establishes any old Lincoln biography as the standard life is the kind of Lincoln the author has chosen to knit together. A successful biographer will grasp the Lincoln most suitable to the moment, costume it in erudition and endow it with scholarly authority, and then read it right back to the public from which it was drawn. Like every popular entertainer, the biographer gives the people what they want—the Lincoln they hope for, a Lincoln like them.

Carnegie's Lincoln was the Great Salesman, a frontier Babbitt straight from the pages of *How to Win Friends and Influence People*; the country's strivers and boosters thrilled to the tale. At the zenith of the Cold War Benjamin Thomas gave us Lincoln the colossus, bestriding history as a symbol of the triumph of American virtue, solemnized in Thomas's Ciceronian prose. Donald's book dismissed the worshipful views of Lincoln and gave us a figure drained of greatness by revisionism—"a much more accessibly modern man," as one reviewer put it, "demythologized," perfect for the wised-up Baby Boomer.

White's Lincoln is an accessibly modern man, too. It's an intimate portrait, lingering over the subject's emotional "journey." Lincoln is a man who has been taught by painful experience to be wary of moralism; he's ambivalent, gentle, long-suffering, brooding, and humbled—tortured, even—by his honest failure to find absolutes in a conditional world. "Lincoln was always comfortable with ambiguity" on his "spiritual odyssey" and in his "struggle with identity." But he's twinkly too: "Lincoln is the president who laughs with us."

He's unmistakably Cuomo's Lincoln. White collects his Lincoln materials and presents a flattering self-portrait of the modern American liberal. It's there in the language he uses. You can take the professor out of San Francisco, but you can't take San Francisco out of the professor. His natural idiom is the pillowy jargon of therapeutic California, where no man will say something when he can "share" it, or consult colleagues when he can "visit with them," or recover from a personal tragedy without "opening up a new chapter in his life."

The Peace Democrats who opposed Lincoln want to "give peace a chance." Soldiers, all of whom were men, had "spouses" rather than wives. Debates, even national debates, are "conversations." Lincoln himself is a "newspaper junkie." Instead of making a conciliatory gesture, or sending a letter, or asking somebody's opinion, or flirting, Lincoln "reaches out." His sublime writings are one more example of his excellent "communication skills."

The cant phrases of today look all the sillier when they're injected into the life of a 19th-century politician. But White is undeterred. His main task is to shave off whatever rough edges might complicate his view of Lincoln as the kind of guy Mario Cuomo would love. *A. Lincoln: A Biography* is a case study in how historians have managed to make Lincoln a contemporary figure, someone more to their taste. At the risk of pedantry it's worth going through some examples.

White wants Lincoln's revulsion at slavery to match our own. He doesn't try to claim that Lincoln was enlightened by contemporary standards, but he does want to reassure his readers that Lincoln's views on race were progressive enough for us to embrace him as an ally, if not a peer. White gathers evidence for this theme as he walks the reader through Lincoln's life. He quotes a famous letter Lincoln sent in the middle 1850s, written when he was one of the foremost antislavery politicians in the country. In the letter Lincoln reminded a friend of the time they had both seen a group of slaves chained together aboard a steamboat, years before. "The sight," Lincoln wrote, "was a continual torment to me."

But the evidence is complicated. As it happens, Lincoln recorded his

THE "RAIL SPLITTER" AT WORK REPAIRING THE UNION.

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thoughts about the slaves contemporaneously, in another letter written immediately after the same steamboat trip in 1841. In it Lincoln doesn't suggest any torment at all, his own or that of the slaves. To the contrary: Though they "were strung together precisely like so many fish upon a trout line," Lincoln wrote, the slaves appeared to be "the most cheerful and apparently happy creatures on board." They were singing and dancing and playing fiddles, too, just like in *Song of the South*. Lincoln's torment was evidently retroactive. White doesn't mention the 1841 letter.

Lincoln's law practice occasionally touched on slavery and race. In 1841, he defended the disputed freedom of a former slave girl. A few years later, in another case, he took the opposite side. Though legally a free state, Illinois allowed slaves to be brought in as temporary laborers. In 1843 a slave named Jane Bryant escaped her master, Robert Matson, in Coles County, not far from Lincoln's hometown of Springfield. With the aid of local abolitionists, Bryant claimed her freedom. Matson later went to court to assert what he said were his property rights in the woman and her children. Lincoln joined with a friend to defend Matson's claim and re-enslave the family. Lincoln lost, fortunately for Bryant. Though he dwells at length on both Lincoln's law practice and his racial views, White doesn't mention the case.

On the subject of politics, the consuming passion of Lincoln's life, White is no help—even misleading. He sums up Lincoln's political style with phrases from the op-ed pages. "He embraced a pragmatic approach to politics," White writes, "and had become wary of politicians whose ideology, be it conservative or liberal, blinded them to the practical considerations inherent in local conditions."

White is using *ideology* here the same way party hacks use it in political argument, as an insult meaning "somebody else's political opinions." The phrase *pragmatic approach* isn't much better. Has there ever been a politician, in Lincoln's century or our own, who doesn't claim his approach is pragmatic? What's unusual in Lincoln's case is the skill and single-mindedness with which he deployed the weapons of politics to get what he wanted. He left no instrument untouched, and he could be sneaky and misdirecting. White, to cite a small instance, simply asserts that Lincoln played no role in picking his second vice president, Andrew Johnson, at his party's convention in 1864. The point is important for many of Lincoln's admirers because it absolves Lincoln preemptively of any responsibility for the nightmarish administration that Johnson presided over after Lincoln's death.

There's evidence that Lincoln kept clear of the process that chose Johnson at the convention. There's also compelling testimony that he orchestrated Johnson's nomination through surrogates, and thereby bestowed upon the country this drunken incompetent as a part of his legacy. White's readers won't know about the contrary evidence; the suggestion would taint Lincoln, make him too complicated.

White finds the conventional politics of Lincoln's day distasteful. He mentions patronage only twice, in reference to strings Lincoln pulled as a one-term congressman to secure jobs for friends. (Lincoln also lobbied hard to land a plum job for himself, but White turns this episode into another example of Lincoln's selflessness.) White's neglect of patronage is baffling, for Lincoln was the most powerful and determined party boss—or party builder, if you prefer—in American history. No official before or since has displayed such an ardor for the spoils of office.

At his inauguration in 1861 Lincoln controlled roughly 1,500 political appointees; he replaced 1,200 of them with loyal Republicans. The government had never experienced a turnover so sudden and so far-reaching. As the war progressed, the government swelled to unheard-of size, and Lincoln's patronage power grew with it. By the end of the war the number of federal employees—in the Post Office, the Treasury, the departments of the Interior and, of course, War—had increased fivefold, and so had the reach of the president's political appointments.

Keeping track of new openings, screening candidates for loyalty, canvassing local bosses for political intelligence, juggling scores of positions at once—these activities consumed as many hours of Lincoln's day as managing the war. They're the reason Lincoln's White House swarmed with office-seekers; the boys knew who to see for a good government job. The allocation of spoils was never far from his mind. A friend went to see him one evening in the depths of the Fort Sumter crisis, expecting to find him tracking events and plotting his next move as secession spun out of control and war loomed. Instead he found the president weighing the credentials of candidates for the receivership of the federal land department in Olympia, Washington.

Lincoln's use of patronage, his willingness to thrust his hands into the (to us) unappetizing innards of politics, was a source not only of his political strength but also of his ultimate success. By careful hiring and firing he could ensure that, across a far-flung country, the legal authorities were men who remained loyal to the Union at its hour of maximum danger. (It also helped guarantee that the Republicans would remain the dominant political party for the next 70 years.) His obsession with patronage was nothing for his admirers to be ashamed of, but readers won't learn anything about it from White's book. The hardheaded party boss complicates White's view of the soft-hearted president who had transcended partisanship. Patronage offends the progressive imagination.

Whenever White has to weigh competing versions of events, the benefit of the doubt always goes to whichever version makes Lincoln look like a softie. The reasoning goes in circles: Lincoln must have done X because he was nice; we know he was nice because he did X. White will even contradict Lincoln himself if he

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has to, on the most momentous questions. He insists that Lincoln's ultimate object in the war was emancipation of the slaves, with the restoration of the Union as a kind of lesser twin. And so he is weirdly dismissive of the plain meaning of Lincoln's words—as found, most famously, in the letter to Horace Greeley, written a year-and-a-half into the war.

In an editorial Greeley had asked what "policy" Lincoln was pursuing in prosecuting the war. Lincoln's response was straightforward: "I would save the Union," he wrote. And: "My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or destroy slavery." And: "What I do about slavery, and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union."

White finds Lincoln's priorities mistaken. So he reinterprets them. "The reply to Greeley is misconstrued if interpreted as a simple declaration of support for the union." White's argument seems to run like this: At the time he wrote Greeley, Lincoln was pondering the release of the Emancipation Proclamation. Therefore the president must have been revising his war aims from Union-saving to slave-freeing; he just couldn't say so in public. And once the Proclamation was issued, Lincoln's change of heart was complete, even though he never admitted it.

White wants Lincoln to serve as an example of that mostly mythical process, "growing in office": The president advances from the crudely nationalistic goal of saving the Union to the universal one of freeing slaves. And when he does, the complicated figure from the 19th century drops away, to be replaced by Mario Cuomo's ideal.

Lincoln said often that he was moved by the injustice of slavery. But did it move him to wage war for four years? Plain, public evidence suggests that Lincoln was moved to war by his devotion to the American constitutional system, "the last best hope of earth," which the Union alone could preserve. The two war aims were entangled in any case. The Constitution, said Lincoln, set slavery on a course of ultimate extinction: If the Union was saved, slavery was doomed. And only the Union, with its founding proposition of equality before the law, could guarantee that slavery, once gone, would be gone for good. The end of slavery was a consequence of preserving the Union, not its purpose.

If Lincoln had "grown in office" it would be hard to explain the ambiguous evidence from the end of the war. By early 1865 the Confederacy faced certain defeat. Lincoln nevertheless engaged in odd, last-minute peace overtures—odd because unnecessary. White says he made them "against his better judgment" for reasons of public relations: Lincoln was "sensitive to the charges that he was not making every effort to end the war." Why White thinks Lincoln thought this goes unexplained.

His narrative leaves out important facts that don't square with his picture of the progressive Lincoln. Three months before Appomattox, Lincoln met with a Confederate delegation in southern Virginia, on his yacht. White describes the meeting at length, relying mostly on the account written by one of the participants, Alexander Stephens, vice president of the Confederacy. In his account Stephens reports that Lincoln, after cordial small talk, laid down conditions for further negotiations. The only thing rebel troops had to do was stop fighting, Lincoln said, and then the southern states "would immediately be restored to their practical relations to the Union."

Not much more transpired at the meeting. Lincoln deflected a few diplomatic feints from his guests, made a couple of Lincolnesque quips, and then called the summit to a close.

That's White's account, anyway. But he omits the most interesting part of Stephens's account. Stephens asked Lincoln a question much on the minds of southerners: What would happen to the Emancipation Proclamation at the end of the war? Would it be understood to have freed only those slaves who were already free at the war's close, or would it retain force to free all slaves? Lincoln replied emphatically that no slave freed under the Proclamation could ever be re-enslaved. Beyond that, however, the courts would have to decide.

"His own opinion," wrote Stephens, "was, that as the Proclamation was a war measure, and would have effect only from its being an exercise of the war power, as soon as the war ceased, it would be inoperative in the future. It would be held to apply only to such slaves as had come under its operation while it was in active exercise."

You can see why White wants to shield his readers from this passage. By his lights it must be horrifying. The Lincoln who emerges is hard to grasp. Stephens may be describing a leader so weary of war that he would do anything for peace, including betray one of his signature accomplishments. Or he's describing a man with ice water in his veins, prepared to abandon a million enslaved blacks who had already begun to call him Father Abraham. Whichever you choose, it isn't the president of progressive dreams.

Will White's trimming bother anybody? By now we should be used to biographers smoothing Lincoln down to a manageable size and more comely proportions. The Lincoln portrayed in *A. Lincoln: A Biography* could easily last its allotted 15 or 20 years. The unambiguously virtuous figure who's comfortable with ambiguity, who shares and reaches out, is too flattering for us not to embrace, too well-tuned to the crochets and vanities of the day.

Meanwhile, the Lincoln of the public record—the man who emerges from undisputed words and deeds—stays right where he is, far beyond our poor power to embellish or simplify. He really did save the Union, and he saved it because he knew that, alone among nations, it "held out a great promise to all the people of the world for all time to come." Such are the brute, uncontested facts of Lincoln's achievement, and reason enough for us to write book after book about him.

It's just too bad that he didn't do what he did by being tolerant of ambiguity, or by laughing with us, or by transcending partisanship, or by rising above politics, or by growing in office—or by being like us. ♦

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Emerald Idyll

Irish eyes aren't always smiling.

BY PATRICK J. WALSH

To be Irish is to be in a kind of perpetual exile. Few people realize that Irish is a distinctive language and tradition. One grows weary of having to explain. My parents are native Irish speakers, the first in our family to have been taught English—or as the great chieftain Shane O'Neill (1530-1567) deridingly put it, "twist the mouth with English." Our grandparents spoke Gaelic/Irish and had not a word of the English tongue. The Irish language, once outlawed by the British, is now a compulsory part of Irish education—but revered as much as Spanish in an American high school.

Finding Ireland
A Poet's Exploration of Irish Literature and Culture
by Richard Tillinghast
Notre Dame, 272 pp., $25

Ireland all too often is seen with sentimental foggy eyes. Among American Irish, the cult of alleged Irishness has become an ersatz religion whose St. Patrick's Day rites have nothing to do with the reality of Ireland. Irish literature has also been subject to nationalist manipulation.

This collection of essays on Ireland by the American poet and critic Richard Tillinghast offers some antidote to many Irish illusions. *Finding Ireland* contains Tillinghast's personal exploration of Irish literature, and many astute essays of literary criticism. Overall, it's an excellent and refreshing work from the eyes of an outsider looking in. Too many books about Ireland are sectarian and the more scholarly hail from an Anglo-Irish academic elite whose perspective tends towards secular materialism.

In seeking to understand Ireland Tillinghast is unafraid to distinguish the Irish from the Anglo-Irish, while making the crucial point that "the words 'Protestant' and 'Catholic' in Ireland have more to do with cultural differences between segments of the population than they do with religion per se." The Anglo-Irish were the people the British conquerors settled in Ireland and placed in charge of all civil authority, to the detriment of the native Roman Catholic/Gaelic population, a process that lasted centuries until Ireland gained independence in the early 20th century and became a republic.

Tillinghast indicates the "insecurity" of the Anglo-Irish position in Ireland, summed up by an early settler, Baron Maurice Fitzgerald, in 1170: "Such in truth is our lot that while we are English to the Irish, we are Irish to the English." The precariousness of these people produced a compelling literature, and the best essays here are about some lesser-known Anglo-Irish figures: Somerville and Ross, Elizabeth Bowen and William Trevor. Unlike Lady Gregory, John Millington Synge, or the early Yeats, all darlings of Anglo-Irish studies courses, these writers learned to write out of their unique experiences as outsiders in Ireland.

The great poet Patrick Kavanagh, scarcely mentioned here, recognized that the Celtic Twilight formulated by Lady Gregory, Yeats, and Synge was a "thorough going English-bred lie" that provided the Anglo-Irish "who are worried about being *Irish* with an artificial country." And yet Kavanagh singled out Somerville and Ross for high praise because they "evoked something valid in Irish life." Mention Somerville and Ross to most readers, and

> what will come to mind is a romanticized view of Anglo-Irish life in the days before the Republic, replete with sentimentalized stage Irish characters. How far this notion is from the actuality of these authors' vision! They understood human nature and their world too thoroughly for such prettification.

Indeed, Somerville and Ross's *The Real Charlotte* (1884) is probably the finest novel ever to come out of Ireland, an extraordinarily honest and tragic summation of the Anglo-Irish experience. Francie encounters an Irish funeral procession. "Heedless of the etiquette that required that she and Hawkins should stop their horses till the funeral passed," Francie rides her horse through the mourners, and the horse, spooked by the "Irish Cry of ritual mourning," throws her and she breaks her neck. Looking up from the ground, she sees "The faces in the carts were all turned upon her, and she felt as if she were enduring, in a dream, the eyes of an implacable tribunal."

Richard Tillinghast

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME PRESS

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In exploring Irish culture *Finding Ireland* dispels many falsities, but swallows others whole. Far too much pontification has come from the secular left in Ireland about the alleged puritanical repressions of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland. I knew an Irish priest who used to say that those writers fostering this myth were "crying all the way to the bank" and in the 1960s the poet John Montague, parodying Yeats's *September 1913*, ridiculed the notion: *Puritan Ireland's dead and gone, / A myth of O'Connor and O'Faolain.*

Today, as Tillinghast recognizes, Ireland is part of secular Europe, mass is sparsely attended, and whatever cultural unity the nation has, it comes more often from the television screen than from the pulpit. This new oppression, subsuming all Europe, is what Pope Benedict calls the dictatorship of relativism, and Tillinghast finds Ireland's "Celtic tiger" material wealth "distressing." He quotes the poet Derek Mahon: *Foreign investment conspires against old decency / Computer talks to computer, machine to machine.*

Ireland fought for centuries for independence and declared itself a republic in the 1916 Easter Rising. It is paradoxical that so hard fought a sovereignty should be subsequently and readily surrendered, for material prosperity, to the European Community. Ireland's lovely currency, designed by Yeats, was recently mothballed for the standardized euro. The older Irish currency was shadowed by the watermark of Kathleen Ni Houlihan, a mythic figure of national identity; today, immigration into Ireland stokes fears that the nation is losing its cultural identity and heritage.

Finding Ireland has always been difficult, and in his short-lived journal *Kavanagh's Weekly*, Patrick Kavanagh asked a question decades ago that is applicable today:

> This country is dead or dying in its false materialism. Where the mistake is made is in seeing life as a purely material thing. . . . The basis of this point of view is a fundamental lack of belief in God. Nothing matters but the job and the salary it brings. Does anybody really believe in anything? ♦

Members Only

The obstacle to academic freedom is academics.

BY MARK BAUERLEIN

Prospect House at Princeton

MAHLON LOVETT / PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

Back in 1915, when the American Association of University Professors issued the founding statement of academic freedom in the United States, it singled out three threats to the search for truth. Religious authorities, founders and donors, and public opinion each constrained the free pursuit of knowledge in research and teaching, the *Declaration of Principles on Academic Freedom and Academic Tenure* stated, and professors who voiced dissident beliefs risked losing their jobs if a bishop in the president's office, a wealthy patron, or a mobilized public didn't like them.

For the Common Good
Principles of Academic Freedom
by Matthew W. Finkin
and Robert C. Post
Yale, 272 pp., $27.50

In today's debate over academic freedom, however, while the career dangers look the same, the enemy has consolidated into one: off-campus conservative critics. The National Association of Scholars, the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, David Horowitz, the occasional George Will column—they mark a coordinated onslaught of scare tactics and cheap tricks, the thinking goes. They don't occupy positions on the faculty or in the administration or among the trustees, but nonetheless, they have thrown campus denizens into alarm.

Mark Bauerlein, professor of English at Emory, is the author, most recently, of Negrophobia: A Race Riot in Atlanta, 1906.

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One hears of "The Contradictions of Cultural Conservatism in the Assault on American colleges" (an article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*) and *The Myth of Political Correctness: The Conservative Attack on Higher Education* (a 1995 book). In a heated 2005 statement in the *Chronicle*, Columbia professor (and former-provost) Jonathan Cole pinpointed "conservative ideologues in Congress" and "the Bush Administration and its followers on Capitol Hill and in statehouses" for choking scholarly inquiry, and his title summed up the condition: "The New McCarthyism."

The assumption is now customary, and countless exchanges I've witnessed at academic conferences and dinner parties lament the right-wing menace at length—with the participants never imagining that a conservative might sit at the table.

So it is no surprise that this new book by two law professors, *For the Common Good*, starts by noting that "frequent and fierce debates about the nature of academic freedom have resulted from a systematic and sustained effort to discipline what some regard as an out-of-control liberal professoriat." Authors Matthew Finkin of the University of Illinois and Robert C. Post of Yale admit that outcries of a "liberal professoriat that has subverted and betrayed basic academic values" have been "loudly reiterated throughout the country" in spite of, they add, "the alarming absence of empirical evidence underlying these repeated charges."

But rather than contesting the charges, they have a different aim. Adopting the pose of reasoned observers rising above the fray, they review a century of texts, cases, and principles that make up the "common law" of academic freedom in our nation and that can "guide us through current controversies with intellectual integrity and coherence." The result is a handy and readable survey of theory and practice, with pointed illustrations of faculty renegades and administrator tyrants, along with the AAUP's efforts to arbitrate the delicate balance between intellectual innovation and academic duty, adversarial minds and scholarly guidelines.

Finkin and Post venture prudently through the central cruxes—the status of professors as employees; the services they owe employers, colleagues, students, and the public; teaching vs. indoctrination; the rights of students—and they helpfully recall petty despotisms over the years and the ideals that best oppose them.

For all their calm and impartiality, though, the authors overlook a key element, one that dwarfs the perils set by donors and churchmen. It marks, in fact, a gaping and symptomatic blind spot that contributes to the very dangers Finkin and Post describe. It isn't their failure to take conservative complaints seriously, though that certainly happens. Rather, it is that, in the entire book, Finkin and Post accept the values and protocols of academic disciplines as all-intellectual, all-scholarly. They acknowledge wayward professors who penalize students for not following party lines, but they don't acknowledge how party lines can take root in fields and don the mask of academic doctrine and propriety.

They speak of "professional expertise," "professional norms of inquiry," "criteria of academic merit," and "accepted intellectual standards" without admitting the obvious fact that political and ideological values settle into disciplines all the time, particularly the "softer" ones (humanities departments, education schools, etc.). They are so accepted that they look precisely like norms and standards. And they repress academic freedom not by an individual's fiat, but by a collective professional judgment—for instance, a department voting to deny tenure to an assistant professor.

Here's an example of how it works. The Mission Statement of the School of Social Work at the University of Texas states that the principles and standards that guide "the conduct of our faculty, staff, and students" are, one, "we should work to promote social justice and social change, and should strive to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice," and, two, that "the dissemination of knowledge is enhanced by the presence of cultural and ethnic diversity in our classrooms."

There are two problems here. First, the statement proposes a course of action, not of understanding. It doesn't say, "We should reflect on various theories and practices of social justice." It says "promote." Second, it makes a flat assertion about knowledge in diverse classrooms that, in effect, closes off an important line of research. In truth, the whole question of learning outcomes in diverse and nondiverse classrooms remains open in education research—but not here. A single conception (needless to say, a tendentious one) is written into the premises of the field. If a student wants merely to inquire whether or not knowledge does circulate better within a culturally and ethnically diverse classroom, he violates first principles.

Participants in the University of Texas School of Social Work must accept one answer if they wish to continue. And when some conservative objects, insiders in the school may reply, "Well, this outlook has been established as expert thinking in the field." Thus an agenda passes as expertise.

Other examples are easy to find, and so, when Finkin and Post cite professional norms as if they were always the result of open inquiry—when they announce, "In higher education no idea is immune from potentially scathing criticism"—one wonders what universe they inhabit. Sacred cows are everywhere (diversity, multiculturalism, affirmative action, pro-choice), and if you cross them, you jeopardize your advancement.

If academic freedom is "the freedom to pursue the scholarly profession . . . according to norms and standards of that profession," then academic freedom rests on what academics erect as normative. A nice, convenient formulation, and with it Finkins and Post give professors a commanding rejoinder to conservative critics: "You are not one of us," they huff. "You are not credentialed. You do not qualify for this discussion." ♦

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Surge Protector

Doubting Thomas Ricks wrestles with success.

BY DANIEL FORD

Twenty years ago the American strategist John Boyd was watching a feature film about the Vietnam War. As the cinematic GIs blundered through a hamlet, killing residents at random, Boyd protested: "We should be the ones in the village, not the people attacking it!"

Anyone wondering why "the surge" worked in Iraq should read Thomas Ricks's account of the battle of Tarmiya in February 2007. Al Qaeda ran the Iraqi police out of town, after which the police station was occupied by 38 Americans of the 1st Cavalry Division. "AQI" tried to run them out, too, assaulting the station one morning with rifle fire, rockets, and a huge truck bomb.

The Gamble
General David Petraeus and the American Military Adventure in Iraq, 2006-2008
by Thomas E. Ricks
Penguin, 400 pp., $27.95

"The battle that followed," Ricks tells us, "resembled the movie *Zulu*, in which a small detachment of British soldiers fends off thousands of African warriors." As he tells the story, one soldier died, 28 were wounded, and their building was destroyed—but not overrun. By sundown the 1st Cav had set up a new base in an abandoned school nearby.

No longer would U.S. soldiers "commute to work," in the words of Gen. David Petraeus, the new commander in Iraq. Increasingly, as 2007 wore on, the Americans became the people in the village. I think it's fair to say that the Iraq war was won at Tarmiya, two years ago this month.

Not that we believed it at the time! As Ricks points out, when the surge was at its height, nearly 60 percent of Americans thought it was failing. They included Senators Barack Obama, Joseph Biden, Hillary Clinton, and Harry Reid, who on April 13 declared that "this war is lost. . . . The surge is not accomplishing anything," and in June bizarrely complained that Petraeus "isn't in touch with what is going on in Baghdad." Republicans, too, were heading for the exits, as were our British allies, many American soldiers, and most of the retired officers' corps.

One of the few stout hearts credited in this book is that of Sen. John McCain, who voiced "cautious, very cautious, optimism" that "we're finally getting it right." But of course, there was another stout heart, though he gets no credit for it in an otherwise meticulous account: George W. Bush.

Ricks wrote an earlier bestseller about the Iraq war called *Fiasco.* Having identified the Bush White House as the font of all stupidity with respect to Iraq, it's evidently impossible for him to concede that the president finally got it right, and that by disregarding the wisdom of Obama, Biden, himself, and most of the American political and military establishments. Bush made the decision and saw it through, but he's the missing man in this account.

Apart from that omission, Ricks does a commendable job of explaining how the war turned around. He gives most of the credit to retired Gen. Jack Keane and, more grudgingly, to David Petraeus and Lt. Gen. Ray Odierno, who presided over the surge. Both had been division commanders during the 2003 invasion, and afterward, in Ricks's word, they became "quiet allies against the blustery incompetence of . . . Lt. Gen. [Ricardo] Sanchez, and . . . the clumsy micromanagement of L. Paul Bremer III," the military and civilian overseers of the initial American occupation.

Starting in January 2007, Petraeus and Odierno could do it their own way: First, they'd ring Baghdad with troops, so munitions couldn't reach insurgents in the city; second, once troops went into a community, *keep them there* so the insurgents couldn't return; third, target Shiite militias as well as Sunni insurgents; and fourth, and most important, work with the tribal chiefs, who were getting sick of al Qaeda's brutal presence.

It was these tactical changes, more than the added manpower, that made the new strategy work. (Petraeus has since been appointed to Central Command, while Odierno—now a four-star general in his own right—holds the top job in Iraq.)

The Gamble has excellent maps and illustrations, though tellingly the sole photo of George W. Bush is out of focus, drawing the eye to David Petraeus. Of great value to students of the Iraq war, Ricks includes 41 pages of documents, including extended examples of that uniquely U.S. military instructional tool, the briefing slide.

In the short run—if that term can fairly be applied to a military operation that has lasted almost six years—the Iraq war has been won, a fact that's hard for its critics to bear. Ricks seems to be betting that we can still snatch defeat from the jaws of victory, and toward that end he finishes his narrative with the observation that "today we may be only halfway through it. . . . In other words, the events for which the Iraq war will be remembered probably have not yet happened."

I look forward to what he, no doubt, expects will be the third volume of a trilogy, perhaps entitled *Calamity*. ♦

Daniel Ford was a reporter during the Vietnam War and has written about it in Incident at Muc Wa, *a novel, and in* The Only War We've Got, *a memoir.*

CHARLES DHARAPAK / AP PHOTO

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Penn's Friends

He knew what he was doing but not what he was saying. **BY PHILIP TERZIAN**

Bounding up to the stage to accept his Oscar for impersonating Harvey Milk in *Milk*, Sean Penn leaned into the microphone and, with just a hint of a smirk, declared: "Thank you—you commie, homo-loving sons of guns!"

The auditorium exploded in appreciative applause, as Penn knew it would; but the applause was not entirely for Penn alone. The members of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences were also pleased by what Sean Penn represented: a shiny new Oscar that was, in effect, a rebuke to all those people in flyover country for whom Harvey Milk is only a name, or might not have found the real Harvey Milk to their taste.

That was certainly the implication of Penn's further remarks, which have attracted considerable attention: He rebuked his home state of California for voting (overwhelmingly) to affirm male/female marriage just as it voted (overwhelmingly) to elect our "elegant president," Barack Obama. Penn's famous anger was palpable as he invoked the "shame" of those who voted in support of Proposition 8, a shame that will haunt them, so he warned, through their grandchildrens' lives.

Maybe it will. I was more interested, however, in Penn's opening line, and the waves of self-congratulatory applause that washed over him as he said it. Nobody in the audience was a communist, of course—that is to say, not a member of the party—but Penn's sarcasm was aimed not in their direction but at that vague, undifferentiated mass of Americans for whom terms such as "commie" are not necessarily humorous.

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Unfortunately, Sean Penn is something of a historic illiterate—in fact, based on a letter of his in my possession, something of an illiterate in general—and could not have been aware that a "homo-loving … commie" would be an oxymoron. Communists were always hostile to the homosexuals in their ranks, expelling them routinely; and in those dictatorial regimes Penn likes to visit and extol (Cuba, in particular), gay lives are furtive, officially circumscribed, subject to severe punishment.

Which brings me to Penn's invocation of "commie." One of the minor victories of the left in the culture wars, and a victory achieved decades ago, is the reduction of "communist," as a descriptive term, to the status of joke. No doubt, this is one sin that may, once again, be laid at Joseph McCarthy's doorstep: All the revisionism in the world cannot undo the damage his indiscriminate name-calling did to anti-communism, or the anti-communist left.

For by corralling all the socialists, parlor pinks, fellow travelers, Ivy League radicals, and debate club Trotskyites of 1930s America into the same ring with actual members of the Communist party, McCarthy gave birth to a generation of martyrs, and diluted the meaning, and genuine implications, of being a communist. Thereafter, the badge was worn with pride—see the Hollywood Ten, *The Crucible*, the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, etc.—and the truth behind the term was essentially lost.

Few would argue today that the Soviet Union was an adornment to mankind, but the conventional wisdom insists that communism never amounted to much in American politics—which is true—and that communists were harmless, even well-intentioned, idealists—which is not true. The fact that American communists were agents of a hostile foreign power is bad enough; the truth that they were agents, and public apologists, for the most successfully homicidal regime in human history, is extraordinary. Their hostility toward their country, and willingness to labor on behalf of its deadly adversary, suggests a pathology beyond comprehension.

And yet, it was not only possible for Sean Penn to laugh along with his fellow "commies" in the Kodak Theatre, but to laugh at the very idea of "commies." Commies are the political equivalent of shadows on the wall, or ghosts under the bed, or figments of especially fevered imaginations. A "commie" is not a communist who wants to re-create Stalin's Russia in America but someone who makes the bourgeoisie squirm, or proudly excoriates Proposition 8. It is, as understood by members of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, something of a compliment.

In the early 1990s, when the Soviet Union collapsed, the television reporter Jeff Greenfield had a jokey segment on the evening news in which he wondered, now that communism was defunct, where Hollywood would find its supply of movie villains.

I remember thinking to myself at the time: On what planet does Greenfield reside? The American movie and television industry had not regarded communists as malevolent since, perhaps, the early 1950s—and not even then, in most instances. Before the end of the Eisenhower administration, the genuine menace—American conservatism, corporate America, Madison Avenue, the Pentagon, and so on—had been identified in *A Face in the Crowd* (1957), *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962), or *Seven Days in May* (1964). And by the time of *Dr. Strangelove* (1963) and *The Russians Are Coming! The Russians Are Coming!* (1966) the whole idea of the Soviet Union as nothing but comic relief was well established.

To be sure, this was before a full accounting of the Gulag, or Stalin's terror, was widely known, and the shame of Proposition 8 was decades in the future. ♦

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"President Barack Obama's nominee to be U.S. trade representative, former Dallas Mayor Ron Kirk, has filed amended tax returns after a review found he failed to pay taxes on $37,750 in speaking fees he donated to his college alma mater, a Senate panel said on Monday."

—Reuters, *March 2, 2009*

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SAMPLE QUESTIONS

26a. Have you paid taxes on any of the following types of compensation?*

- ❍ Freelance income from IMF or other global agency. (Money you earn for work)
- ❍ Use of limousine. (With or without 'wet bar')
- ❍ Speaker's fees. (That's when organizations pay you to talk.)
- ❍ A job.

* ***NOTE:*** *Many nominees don't realize that income is taxable under an obscure provision of the income tax code.*

26b. Have you paid unemployment compensation and other federal taxes for your full or part-time employees? Check all that apply:

- ❍ Nanny, Au Pair, babysitter, wet nurse, surrogate mother
- ❍ Chef, Sous Chef, Concierge, Valet, Butler, Maid, Man Friday
- ❍ Pool boy, yard boy, best boy, gaffer, key grip
- ❍ Limo driver, rickshaw driver, caddy, body man
- ❍ Masseuse, masseur, personal trainer, escort, gigolo

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